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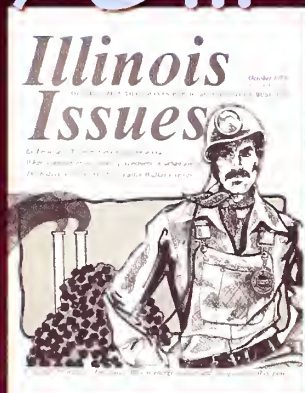
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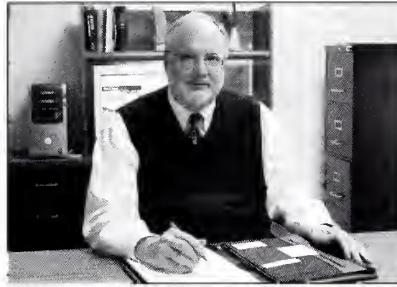
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ILLINOIS DOCUMENTS

Dana Heupel



Cracks are forming in the foundation of responsible reporting

by Dana Heupel

In recent years, the distinct lines that once marked the boundaries for impartial journalism have become blurred by television news commentators, radio hosts and Internet bloggers who practice advocacy under the guise of objectivity.

Indeed, there is a school of thought that objective reporting is obsolete. That trying to maintain impartiality — which everyone agrees is impossible in the absolute sense — ultimately leads to “a view from nowhere.” That journalists have morphed into politically correct observers of public discourse, not participants in the discussion who are seeking solutions to problems. That in their zeal to disclose the shortcomings of both ends of the political spectrum, reporters have become self-righteous, antagonistic and most of all, untrustworthy. Why not just disclose your innate biases, the argument goes, and let readers, viewers and listeners decide whether you speak the truth?

That theory has played out most visibly on the practical stage of cable TV news coverage. Fox News, which

There is a school of thought that objective reporting is obsolete. That trying to maintain impartiality . . . ultimately leads to “a view from nowhere.”

many argue comes at viewers from the right, and MSNBC, which approaches from the left, regularly kick the ratings slats out from under CNN, which purportedly aims to be impartial. Viewers are voting with their remote controls, and it seems they want their news with a point of view.

It's no great secret that journalism is in upheaval, but much of the recent discussion has centered on which platform it will present itself: ink on paper; airwaves; or bits, bytes and pixels. Less apparent are the cracks forming in its very foundation, the questions about what constitutes responsible reporting.

I am enthralled by the future platforms for news and open-minded about the direction to go. But I am unabashedly old school when it comes to the main thrust of journalism. I was steeped in objectivity in my college journalism program, which also stressed such ideals as ethics and civic responsibility. The discussion about whether true objectivity is attainable bores me — like lawyers and doctors and educators, you do your best to ignore your biases and rely on your training. During 35 years as a newspaper reporter and editor and my nearly three years at *Illinois Issues*, I have tried to follow that path. What I wrote, edited and presented was — to the best of my ability — accurate, balanced and, yes, objective.

That road hasn't always been smooth. A politician once tried to slip me a \$20 bill to “do a good story” about him. I started looking for a new job after a newspaper executive and the subject of news story I wrote recast it to make it more favorable toward the subject. My fortunes declined noticeably at another publication when I

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Everyone would be better informed if we took the time to scan the broad spectrum of news reports — from MSNBC to Fox, from the New York Times to the Wall Street Journal, from The Nation to The New Republic — with a thorough understanding of the perspective that each provides.

refused to promote in the news pages a civic project that a company director — and even I — thought was worthwhile. Another newspaper executive sneered that I was “naïve” when I argued that a news story needed more response from a politician he was out to destroy. On separate occasions, I was offered free vision-correction surgery and a free hair transplant to promote specialists who performed those procedures. A glance at my photograph can tell you how those offers played out.

If that sounds sanctimonious, I apologize. I know that journalistic arrogance is partly to blame for the predicament that my craft is in. And over the years, I’ve taken peculiar pleasure in stomping on the sand castles of self-righteous fools. But anyone who’s been in this business as long as I have can tell similar stories.

Obviously, in writing this monthly column, I do think there is a place for opinion and commentary, clearly identifiable as such and separate from “straight news” coverage. But I still believe that objectivity and accuracy remain at the heart of what we call journalism.

It worries me, then, when readers, listeners and viewers migrate into self-contained camps, believing only the “news” that reinforces their pre-

established opinions and seemingly ignoring impartial reporting that adheres to “just the facts, ma’am.” And it illustrates how far trust in mainstream objective reporting has fallen when polls reveal that significant numbers continue to assert, for instance, that President Obama is a foreign-born Muslim or that the Bush administration orchestrated the 9/11 attacks to promote a neocon political agenda in the Mideast.

The blame for those kinds of poll results doesn’t rest entirely with opinionated news commentators, such as Bill O’Reilly and Glenn Beck and Rush Limbaugh on the right and Keith Olbermann and Rachel Maddow and others on the left. The problem is created by the silos that many news consumers have built around themselves, where they obtain their information from a limited number of sources. Everyone would be better informed if we took the time to scan the broad spectrum of news reports — from MSNBC to Fox, from the *New York Times* to the *Wall Street Journal*, from *The Nation* to *The New Republic* — with a thorough understanding of the perspective that each provides. Only then can the words of another specter from my journalism school days, 17th century poet John Milton, play out to their fullest extent: “Let [Truth] and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?”

I hope *Illinois Issues* falls somewhere in that mix of news sources for readers who care about public policy in our state. And I assure you that we will continue to stay the course when it comes to impartiality, despite any other storms gathering on the journalistic horizon. You’ll find occasional analysis and commentary in this and other regular columns and our online blog, as well as in occasional feature articles we label as essays. But the bulk of our magazine and website will reflect our best attempt to present the issues to you completely, accurately and objectively. □

Dana Heupel can be reached at heupel.dana@uis.edu.

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Jamey Dunn



FutureGen 2.0's bypass of Coles County tells a story of problem planning

by Jamey Dunn

Everywhere you looked when you drove up the main drag of my hometown, Mattoon, in the fall of 2007, you could see signs outside of businesses saying, "Welcome FutureGen."

When the project was awarded to the central Illinois town in December 2007, many were celebrating the pending construction of a new coal-fired "near-zero-emission" power plant meant to test a technology that sounded a tad like science fiction at the time. The plant was to function as a lab and demonstration site, which would use a new combination of technologies that had not been proven effective on a commercial scale. The first would have been gasification, a process that turns the coal into gas and allows some pollutants to be removed. The second would have been carbon sequestration, which traps pollutants underground for possibly thousands of years.

I am sure many people of the town, like me, had never heard of those two terms before the bid for FutureGen. I have since become familiar with them and the issue of "clean coal" after writing a piece on it for this magazine. (See *Illinois Issues*, May 2009, page 25.)

While the idea of pioneering a first-of-its-kind technology was exciting, the prospect of thousands of new jobs was also thrilling to a community that had watched manufacturing jobs disappear during the last 15 years as plants closed or moved to new locations.

The plant was to function as a lab and a demonstration site, which would use a combination of strategies that had not been proven effective on a commercial scale.

After almost two years of evaluating potential sites, the FutureGen Alliance, the group of investors helping to back the plant, chose Mattoon over a site near Tuscola and two in Texas. Mattoon was picked because of its geological makeup, as well as positive factors, such as proximity to rail lines and water.

But doubts loomed over the project from the very beginning. "It became clear very shortly after that announcement ... when we couldn't get the official record of decision [from the Department of Energy]. And that was when it became pretty obvious to the community something is not right here," says Angela Griffin, president of Coles Together, a county economic development group that has worked closely on the project.

FutureGen stalled after basically being scrapped by the Department of Energy under then-President George W. Bush. Officials cited the rising cost estimates for the plant, but many in Illinois felt

that the decision was made for political reasons and displeasure over the site choice. At the time, U.S. Sen. Richard Durbin alleged that a former U.S. under secretary of energy, C.H. Albright, referred to Mattoon as "some swamp in Illinois" during a conference call about the project.

So stakeholders went into a holding pattern waiting for a new president to be elected. Many in Coles County thought having then-U.S. Sen. Barack Obama in the White House might help resurrect the project — which he supported — in his home state. Coles County, normally a solidly Republican area, did indeed back Obama in the 2008 election.

The new administration's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided \$1 billion for fossil fuel research, and many believed it was the funding for FutureGen. Yet the project continued to stall.

Last month, Durbin announced a revamped version of the project, called FutureGen 2.0, without the new power plant in Coles County. Instead, carbon dioxide emissions from a retrofitted plant in Meredosia would have been pumped through a 175-mile subterranean pipeline through Decatur and then down to Mattoon to be sequestered underground in the same basin that the original FutureGen plant would have used to store emissions. Durbin promised Coles County a training center where workers

would learn how to retrofit coal plants with oxygen-combustion technology.

Durbin estimated the project would create 1,000 construction jobs and 1,000 other jobs with businesses and suppliers serving the project. Meredosia would gain 47 to 50 full-time permanent positions when its plant reopens.

Mattoon got a week to decide. Durbin says the project had to move forward quickly to get the stimulus money. It wasn't surprising when Coles Together announced that Mattoon would not participate in FutureGen 2.0. The public backlash was pretty overwhelming. People in Mattoon felt as if they had been strung along and deceived.

But Durbin says the estimated costs of the original project had gotten too big. U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu said last year the plant could cost more than \$2.3 billion to build. Illinois only had \$1.2 billion in federal funds to work with, and Durbin says the technology that FutureGen was going to test was already being used at other plants.

"It became [a method] that was being proved out on a commercial basis. ... So we had to find another way to create this opportunity for Coles County and Illinois. ... One that fit into the existing budget," he says.

However, John Mead, director of the Coal Research Center at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, says the combination of technologies from the original FutureGen plan, including the production of hydrogen gas, have not been demonstrated working together. He supports both the Meredosia and FutureGen projects. "We need a suite of technology choices, and underlying all of this is the need to integrate these technologies with carbon capture and sequestration."

The Meredosia project could produce some useful results. With so many coal-fired plants already in operation, a retrofitting technique to cut carbon emissions would be an important technological advance. Pipelines could capture and sequester carbon from all over the state, including areas that do not have the geological make-up conducive to storing carbon. However, the Department of Energy should have avoided the appearance that the reconfigured project is a slapdash 11th-hour modification, and

Durbin says the estimated costs of the original project had gotten too big.

Mattoon should not have been forced to make such an important decision so quickly. The DOE should have been more realistic about its goals and transparent about its intentions.

In reality "clean coal" is a misnomer: The process of mining coal continues to be dangerous, dirty and environmentally damaging, no matter what becomes of the emissions. Ideally, we would move away from using coal altogether and shift jobs other growing energy industries.

Coal-fired plants generate half of the electricity in the nation and create more than a quarter of its carbon pollution. If America is going to keep burning coal — which seems likely at least in the short-term — and also work to slow global warming, some big steps must be taken.

If the federal government is going to begin regulating carbon emissions — which global warming seems to be making necessary and inevitable — it needs to work with power producers to find ways to reduce carbon. That means investing in solar and wind power, electric vehicles — the works. We must start developing the green infrastructure that will power our economy in the future. If we are going to stimulate the economy with government spending, it makes sense to do so by funding things we need.

The inability to get the most bang for the buck when it comes to stimulating the economy while also building "green" infrastructure is a recurring complaint. Examples include spending billions on so-called high-speed trains that will travel 100 miles-per-hour slower than their European counterparts and creating numerous wind farms while missing the opportunity to replace lost manufacturing jobs by making more of the turbines in the United States.

Griffin says that much to her surprise, turning FutureGen into a stimulus project may have helped to kill it. "In my mind, it would have been just the opposite effect. I would have thought the

stimulus bill was looking for things that were shovel-ready, and this thing has been shovel-ready since December of 2007."

She adds that mixing the project with the stimulus package might have blurred some of the intent. "The project stood for so much more than just a stimulus project. I think when it became a stimulus project, it got caught up in that whole notion. ... It's almost as though folks at [the Department of Energy] forgot why we went into this project in the first place, and it wasn't to achieve what the stimulus bill was trying to achieve. ... [It was] giving the next generation and the generation after that inexpensive energy and doing it cleanly."

But we should be able to accomplish both.

Griffin says that manufacturing jobs in Coles County have recently held steady, and so has the unemployment level, which is near the state's average. "I don't want to paint a picture here that we were so desperate and this is going to crush us." She says Coles Together is acquiring the land where FutureGen would have been and hopes to bring in another carbon sequestration project, which would also create jobs in the area.

I am by no means advocating so-called clean coal as the answer to America's energy woes. I am also not saying that FutureGen or FutureGen 2.0 is the more worthy project or that either deserves funding over other sustainable energy projects. I am not a scientist; nor can I predict the future. In fact, Mead advocates for both FutureGen projects because at this point, he says no one can tell which technology would be more effective or useful.

What I am saying is that politicians need to own up to the fact that we get most of our electricity from coal, and a climate bill cannot work without funding the research needed to either shift most power generation to another source or finding a way to burn coal without releasing dangerous amounts of greenhouse gases into the air. And if the federal government ever again decides to spend billions to stimulate the economy, it should plan better for the research and construction needed to deal with environmental realities while creating jobs. □

BRIEFLY

TRYING BLAGOJEVICH

Jury foreman: Feds need to simplify case

Before the prosecution retries former Gov. Rod Blagojevich sometime next year, it needs to work on simplifying its case, the jury foreman from the first trial says.

Judge James Zagel said he plans to set a date for the former governor's trial to begin no earlier than January 4. Blagojevich was convicted on one count of lying to federal agents stemming from a statement to FBI agents in 2005. At that time, Blagojevich told them that he kept a "firewall" between his role as governor and his fundraising enterprises.

However, the jury was unable to reach a unanimous decision on 23 other charges or the four counts against the former governor's brother, Robert Blagojevich, that prosecutors have since dropped.

Jury foreman James Matsumoto says the prosecution should make its case less complicated for the next trial, and dropping the charges against Robert was an important first step. "I was really conflicted about Robert. I voted guilty on all four counts."

Matsumoto says he thinks Robert broke the law but gained nothing from it and had good intentions in wanting to help his brother. "Robert did everything for the right reasons. ... I was relieved [when the prosecution dropped the charges]. ... I think he's suffered for two years in this trial, and his life will never be the same."

Although he voted to convict both brothers on all counts, Matsumoto says prosecutors should drop some of the charges against the former governor. He says the case was too confusing for jurors, and the prosecution questioned witnesses and made its presentations in a monotone and repetitive manner that did not hold the jury's attention. "I think [jury members] were split mainly because of confusion and the amount of counts," he says. He thinks the prosecutors should narrow their case to the strongest charges, such as the allegation that Rod Blagojevich tried to sell President Barack Obama's former U.S. Senate seat for campaign cash or personal gain.

JoAnn Chiakulas, the lone holdout on the charges surrounding the alleged sale of the seat, said that while she did not condone



Former Gov. Rod Blagojevich

the former governor's actions, she did not think there was enough evidence to convict him. She said in his taped telephone conversations, he jumped around to many topics and never settled on a plan that could be considered conspiracy. "I think I saw, in the transcripts and in the testimony, shades of gray. To me, that means reasonable doubt," Chiakulas told the *Chicago Tribune*.

Matsumoto says all the jurors did their duty. "We were working diligently. We were focusing on the evidence. ... They took their job seriously. I know that for a fact."

As for Chiakulas, he respects her decision. "That's human nature, I guess, that people see things differently. ... I think she came to her opinion honestly. I feel she is wrong. But she thinks I am wrong."

He says he will likely follow the case when it picks back up in January.

"I wish [the next jurors] luck. I think that we, the citizens of Illinois, deserve accounting from a governor that did things that were illegal, and he should answer for [those acts]."

Janey Dunn

Durbin requires surgery



Sen. Dick Durbin

The biopsy of a tumor removed in August from Sen. Dick Durbin's stomach showed no signs of cancer.

Doctors found the tumor during a routine medical check of the assistant majority leader of the U.S. Senate.

"Senator Durbin went through ... surgery with flying colors," says the senator's spokesman, Joe Shoemaker.

Durbin's doctors say the tumor was completely removed and showed no signs that it had spread to other parts of the stomach, Shoemaker says.

The surgery was performed at the University of Chicago Medical Center. Durbin was released the following day.

Sen. Durbin will not need additional treatments, says Shoemaker. He was given a light schedule after the surgery but has since returned to his regular duties.

Kendall Cramer

LEGISLATIVE CHECKLIST

As candidates start to hit the campaign trail, Gov. Pat Quinn signed a bill that lawmakers hope will bring in some revenue from unpaid taxes and another measure meant to help schools stretch their budgets.



Unfunded mandates

HB 4711 This law allows schools to opt out of certain unfunded mandates. If the General Assembly appropriates some funds for a mandate but not enough to pay for it in full, schools can also modify the program to make it more affordable.



Tax amnesty

SB 377 Under this so-called tax amnesty plan, anyone owing the state back taxes from 2002 to 2009 can pay them from October 1 to November 8 of this year without penalties or interest. State agencies would also be allowed to enter into deferred payment agreements to settle debts at no less than 80 percent of the amount due and use private debt collection agencies to obtain owed money. The plan could bring in an estimated \$250 million. Those who fail to take advantage of the amnesty window will be charged double penalties.



Lt. gov. candidates

HB 5820 This law requires candidates for governor and lieutenant governor to run as paired teams in the primary election.



Pet information

HB 5772 After this law takes effect on January 1, pet stores must provide information about dogs and cats before they are purchased. Stores must give the name, address and identification number of the breeder. They must also list retail price; adoption fees or other charges; breed; age; date of birth; sex; color; and details of vaccinations and health history. Animal shelters must provide all this information to the best of their knowledge, as well as listing any known diseases or other health conditions.

Janey Dunn

Daley won't run

In 21 years in office, Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley beautified his city, sparked school reform and helped to cool political racial tensions. Yet the city continues to be violent, tarnished by corruption and tainted by a lost bid for the Olympics.

Such is the legacy of Daley, who announced in early September that he would not run for a seventh term.

"Many of you will search to see what's behind my decision," Daley told reporters. "It's simple. I've always believed that every person, especially public officials, must understand when it's time to move on. For me, that time is now.

"I've had the opportunity to expand, to build, to create, to unite and compromise for the betterment of Chicago," said Daley, who in December will surpass his father Richard J. Daley's record as Chicago's longest-serving mayor.

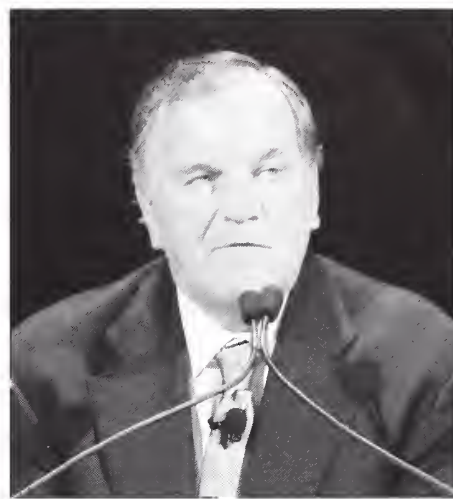
During his reign, Daley added more than 200 acres of parks, oversaw the renovation of Navy Pier and opened Millennium Park.

"He put an emphasis on that (the aesthetics of the city) in a way that can't be underestimated. ... He made life better for all of us in that sense," says Kenan Heise, an author of books on Chicago. However, Daley will also be remembered for how he went about his green initiatives.

In the early hours of March 30, 2003, Daley had a demolition crew dig a giant X into the runway at Meigs Field airport, which he later transformed into a park.

If you live in the city near Navy Pier, near where you can catch a play downtown and send your children to good schools, you will likely have a favorable view of the mayor's tenure, says Rick Kogan, a senior writer at the *Chicago Tribune*, and a radio talk show host who is an author of several books on Chicago. Kogan says Daley leaves a "checkered legacy." "Looking at the entire city, there are little pockets in the city that are like cancerous tumors — various neighborhoods where there is very little hope and very little opportunity."

Daley's decision to tear down public housing without planning for where the former residents would go may have led to gangs fanning out throughout the city, Kogan says.



Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley

According to the *Chicago Tribune*, Chicago police reported that 313 homicides occurred through August, five homicides more than a year ago at this time. Though the city has stepped up efforts to combat crime, a recent poll conducted by the *Tribune* and WGN found that nearly half of Chicagoans believe the problem is worsening.

The city's crime problems can't be blamed solely on Daley, says Paul Green, director of the Institute for Politics at Roosevelt University. "I think he did as well as any mayor could do."

Daley's effort to take over the Chicago Public Schools in 1995 has much to do with how Chicago will be remembered, Green says. Kogan and Heise agree Daley had some success, but beleaguered schools remain.

In terms of corruption, "Daley didn't bring as much new blood into the system as he should have," Heise says. In 2006, Daley's patronage chief, Robert Sorich, was found guilty of two counts of mail fraud. In 2004, a scandal broke in which 49 people were indicted in a scam in which the city paid trucking firms to do little or no work because they had political connections.

Meanwhile, the field is already crowded with would-be candidates for the mayor's office. As identified by the city's two major newspapers, they include: White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel, Ald. Edward Burke, Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart, Chicago City Clerk Miguel del Valle, state Sen. James Meeks and CTA chairman Terry Peterson, among others.

Kendall Cramer

Report's effects to linger

A scathing report on the "Meritorious Good Time Push" program may affect the governor's race, as well as spur legislation during the General Assembly's November veto session.

The Associated Press reported last December that the Illinois Department of Corrections was applying "good time" credit to prisoners' sentences as soon as they began serving them, allowing some to walk free after as few as 11 days. The department previously had a longstanding policy that required prisoners to serve at least 61 days before they could receive discretionary early release credit.

Once the escalated version of the program made news, Gov. Pat Quinn first suspended it and then outright canceled it. He asked Judge David Erickson to work with members of his staff and present recommendations to reform early prison release in Illinois. Quinn said he would not reinstate the longstanding Meritorious Good Time program, with its 61-day waiting period, until changes are put in place.

Quinn claims former Corrections Director Michael Randle, who resigned in September, went against his orders by releasing some violent offenders early.

However, Quinn defended Randle early on, while many in the legislature, including his opponent for governor, Sen. Bill Brady, called for Randle to be fired.

"The man made a mistake. He is a nationally recognized expert, and he's done a number of good things with respect to running our prisons. This is not any easy job," Quinn said.

MGT Push resulted in 1,745 inmates being released before the usual 61 days. On average, they served 36 fewer days than they would have under the 61-day policy. The Department of Corrections estimated that MGT Push could save \$3.4 million annually.

At a Chicago news conference, Erickson called the program "a total failure." The report he helped write said the MGT Push plan was only geared toward saving money and failed to address some of the most important considerations associated with early release. "The MGT Push program was a mistake. Although focused on reducing costs during a fiscal crisis, it failed to accomplish the overriding goals of the state's Code of Corrections: protecting the public's safety and restoring inmates to useful citizenship."

The panel suggested the legislature give the Department of Corrections the power to revoke Meritorious Good Time credit and further limit which offenses make a prisoner eligible for good time credit. The report said the department should create a consistent method to award good prisoners credit for their sentences and determine what education and re-entry help they need.

The panel also recommends the department release an annual report on the program and to update its computer and database system.

Quinn said he wants to direct capital funding to a new computer system and accuses Brady of blocking such efforts. Quinn blamed the aging computer system when the Associated Press uncovered documents showing the state had lost track of more than 50 parolees who were let out of prison early under MGT Push.

Brady spokesperson Patty Schuh said Quinn has the power to fund such a project without legislative approval. "He has more money in discretionary (capital) funding than any governor in the history of the state of Illinois and has more (budgeting) power than any governor in the history of Illinois."

Jamcy Dunn

Illinois' pre-existing insurance plan

Thirty-six percent of those applying for health insurance in Illinois between 2007 and 2009 were denied coverage or had a condition that was excluded. Those conditions included sickle cell anemia, HIV, cancer, depression, anorexia, diabetes and asthma. In fact, the insurer is able to refuse coverage for any reason except race, religion or national origin.

But in 2014, because of federal health care reform, American insurers will no longer be able to cite pre-existing conditions as a reason for refusing or limiting coverage. In the meantime, in mid-August, the state began accepting applications for its Illinois Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan. Coverage through the federally funded program began on September 1.

"The program is not a solution to all of the health insurance problems in our state," says Michael McRaith, director of the Illinois Department of Insurance. "Unfortunately, due to limited funding, it's not a program that is going to cover as many people as we would like. But for thousands of people, it will provide a lifeline to financial security and essential health care, which, in the absence of that program, those people would never get."

The federal government allocated \$5 billion for states to establish high-risk insurance pools for pre-existing condition coverage. Illinois received \$196 million to offer insurance to

those with pre-existing conditions, which is expected to cover 4,000 to 6,000 uninsured individuals. McRaith says about 15 percent of Illinois' 12.9 million population is uninsured. "A significant share have insurance in theory but have a condition that is excluded from coverage by the insurance company."

"We know there's a really great need for fairly priced health insurance coverage in the state," McRaith says. "We're not sure what the demand will be from people who satisfy the eligibility criteria. But our hope is to maximize the number of enrollees, given the limited funding. Our other objective is to ensure that an individual who is enrolled will be able to stay enrolled until 2014, when they will be able to purchase regardless of pre-existing conditions."

The preferred provider plan, which has a \$2,000 deductible, is administered by Health Alliance, an Urbana-based insurer. People with pre-existing conditions who are legal citizens and have been uninsured for six months are eligible.

The cost of premiums for individuals is based on geographic location, age and whether tobacco is used, McRaith says. At the low end, a young resident of southern Illinois who does not use tobacco would pay \$115 per month, while a 65-year-old Chicagoan who doesn't use tobacco would pay more than \$650.

Maureen Foertsch McKinney

Lost race

Losing both rounds in the Race to the Top federal grant competition was a frustrating experience, but Illinois is better for having tried, says state schools Superintendent Christopher Koch.

While the loss was disappointing, Koch says, competing in Race to the Top did spur important reforms that he said would have not happened as quickly on their own, such as legislation that requires higher standards for principal certification. "Being on the losing end of a contest is not something we cherish." However, Koch thinks that "overall, that we are better for having gone through this process. ... These are the right reforms."

In the first round of the competition, the U.S. Department of Education doled out \$150 million to two states. Illinois placed fifth with a score of 423.8 out of 500. In phase two, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Ohio and Rhode Island will split \$3.4 billion awarded. Illinois came in 15th with a score of 426.6.

Koch says the Illinois State Board of Education worked hard to get more school districts and unions to sign on for phase two. The state's participation levels were criticized in the first phase. (For more on that effort, see *Illinois Issues*, September 2010, page 13.)

Some local officials were concerned about allowing the federal government to have too much control over education. Schools were also concerned about where the money for expanded programs would come from when the grants ran out.

Koch also said it is difficult for Illinois to compete with states that have fewer districts. In some of the winning states, each

county is a school district. By comparison, Illinois has 102 counties and 869 school districts.

Koch says the schools participating represent 82 percent of students in Illinois.

ISBE officials focused on the areas that lost points on the first round while doing little to change parts of the application that scored well. However, a completely new panel scored the second round, and parts of Illinois' bid that impressed the first round of judges did not get the same reception. "It makes it hard because we were responding to the first application." He says that because the judges do not compare the states and not all the same judges scored every state, some states had lower participation levels than Illinois but scored higher on that section of the application. "My take on this is that it depends on the team [of judges] you've got. ... It sort of makes it more like a Race to the Top lottery."

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said he has requested \$1.35 billion in funds for a phase three of the competition. Koch says the state board of education would have to consider participation in additional phases when, and if, they become a reality. He says it could be difficult to persuade more districts to sign on, and the board would need to raise funds because the first two bids were put together with money from private donors. "It just seems like a lot of work to put states through, and I don't think that you will have the interest from states that you had before."

Jamey Dunn



Political psychology

Personality types can sway our political views. So says University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign political science Professor Jeffery Mondak.

Mondak's 13-year study of the issue culminated with the publication of his book on the subject, *Personality and the Foundations of Political Behavior*, which was published in June by the Cambridge University Press.

His research involved what psychologists call the Big Five factors, a set core of personality traits: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism (usually referred to as emotional stability). Most of the research involves standard political surveys, Mondak says, but they also include questions about personality. He then tests for statistical relationships between personality traits and political attitudes and behaviors.

The most striking relationship to traits and political attitudes pointed to ties

between personality and ideology, he says.

What he found was that the traits of openness to experience and conscientiousness are strongly related to ideology. Those who are more open to new experiences are probably liberal, while those who are conscientious have the tendency to be ideologically conservative, he says.

"One of the issues that I've long been concerned with is the nature of civic discourse," Mondak says. "It troubles me that there is a lot of finger pointing and shouting and not a lot understanding."

He says his research can help people understand the nature of disagreement and limit it.

Different personality types are going to express political interest in different ways, he says. For instance, extroverts are more likely to be vocal about their political interests by doing such things as joining marches and rallies. Those who are not extroverted are going to be more

comfortable in activities such as mailing letters in a campaign.

Neither approach is wrong, Mondak notes.

He likens another practical use for his research to an observation from children's baseball: "Everybody is good at something," and it works best to have each individual do what he or she is best at.

While some individuals take charge and engage in activities such as joining political rallies, Mondak says, "other people want to be involved but might be happier in the background stuffing envelopes. Just because they are saying 'no' to the political rally doesn't mean they are saying 'no' to political involvement."

Mondak says the next step in research goes beyond the book. In March, he sent out surveys in 25 countries to learn whether his findings can be applied internationally.

Maureen Foertsch McKinney

BRIEFLY

Playing with the palate

Salmon baby food? Hmm?

Registered dietitian Susan Brewer, professor of food science at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, worked with scientists at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's research service in Alaska to study and develop a salmon baby food.

The Agriculture Research Service and the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation was interested in developing a new type of product to boost the salmon industry in Alaska, which is home to one of the largest supplies of wild salmon available anywhere, says Peter Bechtel of the Agriculture Research Service.

While consuming salmon has health benefits for all ages, salmon and other fish contain particular omega-3 fatty acids that are essential for babies because they assist in the development of nerve, eye and brain tissue, Brewer says.

Omega-3 fatty acids are found naturally in breast milk and added to formula. However, once babies are taken off formula or breast milk, parents must find a new way to meet that dietary requirement because babies are incapable of producing a sufficient amount of omega-3 fatty acids on their own.

Several experiments were conducted to try to increase the nutritional value of the baby food. Bone meal was added in one case to increase calcium. In another instance, salmon roe (eggs) was added to increase the amount of omega-3 fatty acids.



Omega-3 fatty acids can reduce the chance of heart disease and other conditions in adults, Brewer says. "Salmon is one of the premier muscle food products in the world," Bechtel says.

The American Medical Association recommends that adults eat fish twice a week, but many people do not meet that recommendation, Brewer says. One reason might be because fresh fish is expensive, especially at distances farther away from the ocean. Some people do not like the taste of fish.

Salmon-based baby food might change the future of Americans' palate, she says. It is popular in Asia, where more fish is consumed.

"Given the fact that we don't eat a lot of fish, if we would like them [children] to develop a taste for fish, what we need to be doing is to try to introduce it at a relatively young age," Brewer says.

If children are not introduced to fish by the age of 5 or 6, they are not as likely to eat it when they are adults, she says.



"Parents are more open to feeding kids for nutritional reasons than they are to eating things for nutritional reasons themselves. ... Most parents realize that children grow rapidly, and you need to pay attention to their dietary requirements." The results of consumer taste-testing found that 70 percent of participants would feed their children the baby food, even if they don't consume fish themselves. Overall, 80 percent of participants would serve the product to their babies.

Even in the Midwest, where people consume the least amount of fish in the United States, there was a positive reaction, Brewer says.

The study was funded by a congressional appropriation to the USDA and the fisheries foundation.

Kendall Cramer

A bounty

An early planting season and sufficient rainfall is expected to account for a bountiful harvest of corn and soybeans this fall for Illinois farmers.



The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service predicts a yield of 180 bushels of corn per acre this fall — a 9 percent increase over 2009 levels. In 2009, corn yielded 174 bushels per acre. Soybean yields are predicted to rise to 49 bushels — an increase of 5 percent. Yield predictions for both crops are close to 2004 records.

The department predicts that nationwide production for both corn and soybeans will rise by 2 percent for 2010.

"Initial forecasts are pretty favorable," says Emerson Nafziger, professor of crop production at the University of Illinois Extension at the U of I Urbana-Champaign.

"Some parts of the corn belt are seeing the best crop they have ever seen," he says.

Farmers were able to get into the fields early. The level of moisture in the ground and temperatures also have an impact on crop production.

"Most of the state has had adequate or surplus soil moisture during hot temperatures," says Mark Schleusener, the deputy director at the Illinois Field office.

The warmer temperatures cause crops to grow more quickly. Corn is a well-adapted crop and does well when it's about 95 degrees, says Nafziger. Temperatures in the middle 80s are more suitable for soybeans.

Kendall Cramer

The great pumpkin crisis that wasn't

Photograph courtesy of the U.S. Department of Agriculture

Illinois grows more pumpkins — not the bright orange jack-o-lantern variety, but the smaller, elongated buff-colored type for cooking — than anywhere else.

Last year, back-to-back rain-soaked seasons in central Illinois had so strained canned pumpkin producers that some shoppers throughout the country found empty shelves when it came time for Thanksgiving.

So, word on the 2010 harvest was eagerly awaited by pumpkin buyers: "The pumpkin crop in Illinois is doing fairly well this year. It's not without challenges, but I think we're going to have a good crop," says William Shoemaker, a senior research specialist in crop agriculture at the University of Illinois Extension.

About this time last year, tractors were trying to slog their way through central Illinois mud. In October, with nearly nine inches of rain "it was hard to harvest in those conditions," says state climatologist Jim Angel. Pumpkins were left in the fields to rot.

This year, challenges came from the weather and disease.

In the spring, prospects for a good pumpkin crop looked sketchy. Morton, the Tazewell County town in the heart of pumpkin-growing country, had an inch or two of rain above normal in April and May, according to Angel. Wet weather carries with it the threat of blight, a fungal disease that can be deadly to pumpkins and other vine-growing plants known as cucurbits:



watermelon, honeydew, squash, zucchini and cucumbers, says Mohammad Babadoost, an associate professor of plant pathology at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. "This year, we had a very wet season. It worried a lot of us growers, producers and academics," he says.

But when harvest time came in mid-August, it appeared that most of the crop in Illinois was thriving and, in fact, ready for picking. For some growers, the crop was ahead of schedule. Despite the wet spring, summer was hotter than usual. "We have an earlier crop because when the weather is so warm, it tends to cause the fruit to mature faster," Shoemaker says.

Then, in the last week of August, another disease attacked. Evidence of the disease downy mildew had appeared in Tazewell County fields, Babadoost says. Though the disease, which attacks plants' leaves, spreads fast, it can be contained. Babadoost says he will continue to call for use of fungicide to keep the disease in control.

"I think we're still going to have a pretty decent season," Shoemaker says. "For the processing pumpkins, they may end up of being a little short of what their goals were, but they still will have a reasonably good crop."

The largest producer of canned pumpkin is Libby's, a brand owned by the Nestle USA. Libby's, hit by back-to-back bad pumpkin-growing seasons, planned for harvest 2010 by planting more acreage and starting production early, says Roz O'Hearn, a spokeswoman for the company.

Libby's, which controls about 85 percent of the canned pumpkin market, was about a third through its harvest by September 1, says O'Hearn. She says she expected the plant in Morton to be shipping out pumpkin by the third week of September.

Maureen Foertsch McKinney

Winter wheat crop down

The number of acres planted with winter wheat in Illinois slipped to a record low in 2010.

Only 325,000 acres were expected to be harvested, according to the crop production report released in late August by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The department estimated production to be 62 percent lower than 2009 levels.

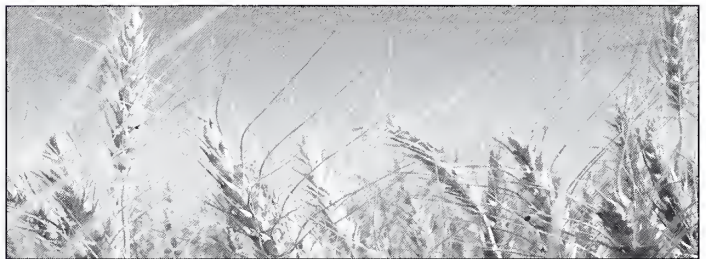
A late 2009 harvest prevented farmers from getting into the fields. Winter wheat is planted in the fall and harvested the following summer.

The number of Illinois acres used for producing wheat has sharply declined over this decade.

For most of the 20th century between 1 million and 2 million acres were planted with wheat, according to USDA records. With a few exceptions, the recent trend has been fewer than 1 million acres.

Illinois farmers are more inclined to plant soybeans and corn because they are more profitable, says Mark Schleusener, the deputy director at the Illinois Field office-USDA-National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

Emerson Nafziger, a professor specializing in crop production at the University of Illinois Extension, expects wheat production to rebound. "As of now, it should not be much of an issue to get wheat planted this fall," he says.



Demand for wheat is currently high because of Russia's drought and a smaller crop in Canada, says Darrel Good, an agricultural economist at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Illinois farmers may benefit from Russia's farming conditions. "The higher demand will add an incentive for farmers to produce more wheat," Good says.

Prices will likely be held at higher levels only if Russia is incapable of getting next year's crops out, he says.

In the 2008 fiscal year, the United States exported \$14.8 billion worth of wheat and wheat products. Illinois contributed about 3 percent or \$427 million to the total amount, according to data held by the Illinois Field Office.

Illinois grows mostly soft wheat, which is used for products such as baker's flour, cookies and pastries. Russia grows hard wheat for breads and pasta, Nafziger says.

Kendall Cramer

Special Senate election

When Illinois voters head to the polls in November, they can cast two votes to fill President Barack Obama's former U.S. Senate seat.

"It's now legal to vote twice for Senate in Illinois," U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, the Republican candidate for Senate, quipped at a recent Republican Party event in Springfield.

U.S. District Judge John Grady ruled that voters must choose a candidate to finish out the last of Obama's term, from November until the January 3 inauguration of new senators. The special election will take place in tandem with the general election on November 2.

A new primary will not be held to determine which candidates run for the seat. Grady, citing the added cost of another election, as well as the lack of time to organize one, ruled that all the candidates who qualified for the general election are also eligible to appear on the special election ballot. So, Kirk will face off against Democratic State Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias and Green Party candidate LeAlan Jones in the special election, as well as the general race.

"[The court's] interpretation of the U.S. Constitution does not allow states to fill a [U.S.] Senate vacancy by appointment," says Ron Michaelson, executive director of the Illinois State Board of Elections from 1976 to 2003.

Roland Burris currently holds the seat after a controversial appointment by former Gov. Rod Blagojevich. Blagojevich stood trial on corruption charges, including an alleged plot to trade the seat for campaign contributions or personal gain. The jury was unable to reach a verdict on charges related to the alleged planned sale of the seat.

The 17th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution gives the governor the power to make a temporary appointment to a vacant seat, but the court ruled that Burris' temporary term ends at the next scheduled election after his appointment.

Democrats called for a special election soon after Burris' appointment but later backtracked, saying it would be too costly. However, Gov. Pat Quinn recently emphasized the importance of following the letter of the law in November. "That's

the great thing about our country and our state: We have a rule of law. ... When the judges speak, we pay attention and follow the rule of law. I think that's the great thing about America and about Illinois, that we believe in the law. That's something as a lawyer — I happen to be a lawyer — I take to heart every day."

Michaelson says election officials should make efforts to educate voters so they are not confused in the election booth. However, he says the special

ACT score slips

Illinois' 2010 graduates had the highest average ACT score among the eight states that test 90 percent or more of their students, according to the Illinois State Board of Education.

However, the state's overall composite score, which mirrored the national average, dipped a bit from 20.8 in 2009 to 20.7 in 2010.

Although ACT is designed for students who plan to attend college, Illinois requires all 11th graders to take the test. When the state first began testing all of its students, the average score dropped. "Over the past eight, nine, 10 years, we have seen that come up — it's very close to the national average now," says Matt Vanover, a spokesman for the State Board of Education. Most states test only college-bound students. Other states with 90 percent or more of their graduates taking the ACT include Colorado, Louisiana, Tennessee, Wyoming, Michigan, Kentucky and Mississippi.

Testing all of the students is a way to raise the bar and encourage improvement, Vanover says.

This year, Illinois had a record number of ACT takers: 145,520. The number of test takers has grown by more than 8,000 since 2006, when 137,399 students took the test, according to the ACT.

In the future, the state score will likely see some incremental gain because of tightened standards that were implemented in June. More than 25 states have adopted tougher standards based on national recommendations, Vanover says.

election's addition to the ballot will likely not mean much to voters, and the same candidate will probably win both contests. "I don't want to call [the special election] a formality, but it is appearing to be that. ... Most people are not going to understand it well, but they are going to vote for the same candidate [they chose in the general election]."

If the same candidate wins both races, he would have seniority over the other freshman senators who will be inaugurated in January.

Jamey Dunn



"The ACT is a benchmark that helps us when we look at preparing students for college and career readiness," State Superintendent Christopher Koch said in a release. "As we move forward with our newly adopted, more rigorous Illinois Learning Standards, we would expect college and career readiness to improve. It's important that families and districts ensure students are not just in school but that they're taking a rigorous core of classes necessary to succeed."

Vanover says: "As you move forward with more rigorous content, that will help to increase scores in the future. The learning standards tried to drive [students] toward college and career readiness."

"It's essentially setting the bar higher for students in that as we move forward with that higher bar we would hope to see incremental gains on the ACT."

Maureen Foertsch McKinney

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The Blagojevich legacy

Not only did he raise the bar for political fundraising and dramatically lower it for political discourse, he presided over a long slide into fiscal catastrophe

by Kevin McDermott

Soon after Rod Blagojevich was led in handcuffs from his Chicago home in December 2008, comedian Jon Stewart of Comedy Central's *The Daily Show* noted that Illinois has seen four of its last seven governors arrested (Otto Kerner, Dan Walker, George Ryan and Blagojevich).

Noting that half of all murders go unsolved, Stewart hit viewers with the inexorable math: "You are more likely to end up in jail if you become governor of Illinois than if you are a murderer."

It was an early indication of one aspect of Blagojevich's legacy: Illinois as a national punch line. As U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, the Republican nominee for the U.S. Senate, asked a gathering of fellow Republicans in Springfield in August, "How many of you have talked to an out-of-state friend or relative who laughed at you because you're from Illinois?"

Yucks aside, what is likely to be Blagojevich's lasting legacy in his home state?

Before Jay Leno and David Letterman learned to pronounce his name, he was in office for six years, fundamentally changing politics and government in Illinois. He raised the bar for political fundraising and dramatically lowered it for political discourse and civility. He presided over a long slide into fiscal catastrophe that he arguably didn't cause but certainly didn't prevent. He introduced a dictionary of new phrases into the state's political lexicon — from "drunken

sailors" to "bleepin' golden" — that will be with us for a long time.

Supporters, what few of them are willing to speak up these days, credit him for a progressive policy agenda on health care and other issues that was ahead of its time. Detractors blame him for nothing less than "the crippling of state government," in the words of Charles N. Wheeler, director of the Public Affairs Reporting program at the University of Illinois Springfield.

Blagojevich's view of his own legacy was clear in August.

"I'm up against the giant Goliath, and I take solace in the biblical story of David," Blagojevich told NBC's *Today* show, discussing his conviction on one of 24 federal criminal counts and his expected re-trial on the others. "I don't have a slingshot, but I do have the truth on my side."

When the history of Blagojevich's impact on Illinois government is written, it will certainly contain this little piece of irony: The man accused of trying to shake down a children's hospital did more to promote campaign finance reform than just about any other single state politician in modern times.

Since January 2009, Illinois has banned campaign donations from state contractors — so-called "pay to play" arrangements — and next year, it will implement its first-ever across-the-board limits on campaign donations. After a generation as one of the few "Wild

West" states that still allowed completely unfettered political donations from any source, Illinois' campaign finance system has started to edge its way out of the 19th century.

Virtually everyone involved in creating those reforms says Blagojevich's fundraising practices and his problems, both before and after his arrest, were the driving factor. "In the end, Rod Blagojevich turned out to be the ultimate reformer," says Cynthia Canary, executive director of the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform.

Spurring that change pretty clearly wasn't Blagojevich's plan, despite his stated enthusiasm for reform when he won his first term in 2002 against a Republican Party decimated by scandal.

Six years later, when Blagojevich was presented with **House Bill 824**, to bar political contributions from state contractors, he tried to kill it with an amendatory veto. Blagojevich's own aggressive fundraising practices from state contractors had helped create momentum for the bill, and his dysfunctional relationship with the General Assembly by late 2008 certainly contributed to the overwhelming override of his veto (with just three opposing votes) in September of that year.

In typically grandiose fashion, Blagojevich's veto message on the bill lauded the goal of separating campaign money from the state's contracting system, but declared: "(It) does not go



A big screen outside WBBM-TV studios, located at the Daley Plaza in Chicago, broadcasts a taping of Late Night with David Letterman.

far enough. We must safeguard the integrity of public office, and instill public confidence that no member of the executive or legislative branch can profit from his or her position.”

Behind the scenes, his view on the matter was somewhat different, according to federal wiretaps. “Before the end of the year, right?” he demanded repeatedly of his brother and eventual co-defendant, Robert Blagojevich, in late 2008, as they discussed a pending \$100,000 contribution from the race-track owner that would not be allowed under the new rules that would kick in January 1, 2009.

Rep. Jack Franks, a Woodstock Democrat and a co-sponsor of the legislation, says he wasn’t especially surprised to discover that gulf between Blagojevich’s public pronouncements in favor of reform and his private machinations attempting to get around it. “That was the problem with Rod Blagojevich: What he said in public had nothing to do with what he said in private,” says Franks.

The second wave of reform came after Blagojevich’s December 2008 indictment and his January 2009 impeachment and removal from office. After a false start, the legislature and Gov. Pat Quinn

last year instituted **Senate Bill 1466**, which, as of January 1, 2011, will bar donations of more than \$5,000 per election from individuals to any one candidate, with \$10,000 and \$50,000 limits, respectively, on contributions from businesses and political action committees.

“The legislature clearly reacted to the story that was unfolding before our eyes,” says Sen. Don Harmon, an Oak Park Democrat and a lead sponsor of the legislation.

Quinn signed the bill into law on December 9, 2009 — one year to the day after Blagojevich’s arrest. “Last year, on this very day, was an alarm bell ... that



Former Gov. Rod Blagojevich appears on *The Bonnie Hunt Show*

there (were) serious, serious problems in our state government,” Quinn said at a crowded bill-signing ceremony in Chicago.

The tenor of Illinois politics under Blagojevich might be summed up as playground-caliber name-calling, backed by unprecedented stacks of money. Going into the first general election season since his arrest, there are indications that the tone is still echoing.

Soon into Blagojevich’s first year in office, it became clear that the underside to his Clintonesque optimism was a form of vilification politics that was beyond what even seasoned Springfield veterans were used to. In autumn 2003, he stunned the Capitol political culture by publicly accusing the legislature (controlled by his fellow Democrats) of spending like “drunken sailors.” In 2004, he accused his own state Department of Education of being “a Soviet-style bureaucracy” in a speech that he

delivered while his state schools chief sat watching from the audience.

The targets piled up during his tenure: the business sector, state workers, Republicans, fellow Democrats, the federal government, the media. Virtually anyone who impeded or questioned Blagojevich’s agenda was fair game. “He’s found a bogeyman every year,” Steve Brown, spokesman for House Speaker Michael Madigan, a Chicago Democrat, said in early 2008. Madigan and his daughter, Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan, were among the most frequent targets.

“The level of civility ... went off a cliff when Rod Blagojevich was elected,” says Sen. Kirk Dillard, a Hinsdale Republican who is known in Springfield for working with both parties but who quickly found he couldn’t work with Blagojevich. “Blagojevich poisoned, even with members of his own party, any constructive discourse between the legislature and the executive branch of state

government. He brought government grinding to a halt.”

Government ground back at him. By 2004, his second year in office, Blagojevich had inadvertently introduced yet another new phrase into the lexicon of Illinois politics: “Memoranda of Understanding,” or “MOAs.” These were documents that the legislature forced Blagojevich to sign in exchange for ending the budget stalemate that year — essentially written promises to carry out what he’d agreed to do during the budget negotiations. They were the kinds of agreements that used to happen with a handshake, but lawmakers in both parties had concluded by that point that Blagojevich had systematically lied to them during the previous years’ negotiations. He had to sign 54 MOAs that year.

“Can you get re-elected if you tee off all the elected officials?” Patti Blagojevich once asked her husband, as she relayed it to *Chicago* magazine in a 2003 interview.

His answer, she told the magazine, was: “Yes, so long as the people like you and you have enough campaign funds, it doesn’t make any difference what the politicians think of you.”

Did he do anything right?

From the viewpoint of a progressive agenda, he certainly pushed the correct buttons. His obsession with health care — especially his signature “All Kids” program, creating state-subsidized health care availability for all Illinois children — was arguably ahead of the curve on the current national debate. He fought for universal preschool, free public transportation for seniors, a higher minimum wage and other progressive initiatives.

“My wife and I now have a beautiful 35-pound daughter because of him,” Blagojevich’s attorney in his first corruption trial, Sam Adam Jr., told reporters in an emotional statement in July about how the “All Kids” program had helped his daughter, who was born prematurely. “I will go to my grave being grateful to him.”

Not everyone was so impressed. Detractors, then and now, say many of those initiatives were gimmicky and ineffective and displayed an end-justifies-the-means attitude that ignored fiscal reality and, sometimes, legality. After Blagojevich made an epic show of flouting federal restrictions to make Canadian prescription drugs available to Illinoisans, for example, few took advantage of it. His free-rides-for-seniors initiative is costing Chicago’s public transportation system millions, much of it for riders who, critics say, don’t need free rides.

Given the scope of the national economic downturn, even Blagojevich’s harshest critics would be hard-pressed to conclusively lay the state’s current fiscal mess at his doorstep. But, indisputably, his policies didn’t help forestall fiscal crisis, and there was never any indication they were meant to. One sobering mental image from the federal corruption case is of Blagojevich hiding in a bathroom to avoid having to talk with his budget chief.

“While every state has suffered in the recent economic situation, Illinois’ problems were exacerbated by Blagojevich’s big spending and inattention to governmental detail,” says Dillard.

For progressives, then, the Blagojevich legacy could end up making it harder to persuade skeptics of the sincerity of those efforts, since even many people who agreed with his stated agenda have come away disillusioned.

“He exemplified, to the nth degree, the image of Illinois as an individualistic political culture, where it’s all about personal gain, as opposed to somebody who comes in concerned about public policy,” says Wheeler of the UIS Public Affairs Reporting program. ... I think ‘All Kids’ was a good idea, but I don’t think his primary motive was to help people. He wanted to make himself a candidate for president.”

Indeed, defenders of Blagojevich’s policy agenda are few today, even among those who agree with the policies themselves.

Rep. Jay Hoffman, a Collinsville Democrat and once Blagojevich’s staunchest ally in Springfield, says when pressed that Blagojevich’s health care and other initiatives “led the nation in some significant ways.” But when asked to characterize how Blagojevich the policymaker will be viewed in the future, Hoffman demurred, “In light of what’s been happening, it’s hard to really gauge that.”

As for Blagojevich’s own view of that part of his legacy, the federal wiretaps reveal a deep bitterness at polls that showed his reputation by 2008 was less as a progressive politician than a crooked one.

“I (expletive) busted my (expletive) and (expletive) people off and gave your grandmother a free (expletive) ride on a bus. Okay? I gave your (expletive) baby a chance to have health care,” he says in one of the tapes. “... Only 13 percent of you all out there think I’m doing a good job. So (expletive) all of you.”

Blagojevich raised unprecedented amounts of money during his tenure as governor, largely with the kinds of five- and six-figure donations from state contractors that would ultimately be outlawed, in part as a result of his remarkable success with them.

In his 2006 re-election campaign, with a record \$26 million at his disposal, he swamped Republican challenger Judy Baar Topinka with a television blitz that centered on former Republican Gov.

Not everyone was so impressed. Detractors, then and now, say many of those initiatives were gimmicky and ineffective and displayed an end-justifies-the-means attitude that ignored fiscal reality and, sometimes, legality.

George Ryan, who was by then awaiting the start of his prison term for corruption. Topinka, the former state treasurer, and Ryan had never been perceived as especially close allies, but Blagojevich’s blitz took care of that. The money-driven campaign — especially the now-infamous slow-motion clip of Topinka dancing a polka with Ryan at a political event — destroyed Topinka’s previously affable persona and nudged the unpopular Blagojevich into a 49-percent victory.

“He demonstrated in his re-election the importance of outspending the opponent,” says Mike Lawrence, retired director of the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University Carbondale and a top aide under former Republican Gov. Jim Edgar.

“His negatives never dropped, but he shouted her down.”

There is no way to know for sure whether this year’s muddy Illinois gubernatorial and U.S. Senate races — full of guilt-by-association themes and personal-history attacks — might contain more constructive dialogue were it not for that lingering example. But for Topinka, this year’s Republican nominee for comptroller, the lesson is clear.

“People have to become more engaged; they have to pay attention ... and not just watch the commercials,” she says. Asked whether she has been seized with any “I-told-you-so urges” toward the public lately, she responds with a laugh: “No. They know what they got, and they’re going to suffer for it for a long time.” □

Kevin McDermott is Springfield bureau chief for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.



A soldier with the Illinois Army National Guard provides security during combat operations in Paktya Province, Afghanistan, April 17, 2009.

Citizen soldiers

The National Guard has borne the high costs of deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq. Has it been overtaxed?

by Harry Levins

Americans often hear that deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq are overstressing the citizen-soldiers of the National Guard.

Typical of such critics is military historian Jerry Morelock of Fulton, Mo. He joined the Florida National Guard as a private in 1963 before going to West Point and then on to an Army career that took him to the rank of colonel.

"The way we're using the National Guard isn't the way it was intended be used," Morelock says, "and it's putting an inordinate strain on Guard members. They're not professional soldiers. They have day jobs."

David Segal of the University of Maryland specializes in the sociology of the armed forces. He says: "The costs of deployment to a National Guard soldier

are in many ways higher than they are to regular forces personnel. For regulars, going to war is their job. But a guardsman has to leave a job or college or whatever."

When National Guard soldiers deploy, the disruption extends to their employers and especially to their families. And overseas, the soldiers run the risk of being killed or wounded.

Even so, other military analysts and people inside the National Guard insist that the Guard is holding its own, even thriving. First, they point to recruiting and re-enlistments.

“We’ve been running between 102 and 108 percent” of the goals, says Maj. Gen. William L. Enyart. As adjutant general of Illinois, Enyart leads the state’s 10,000 Army Guard soldiers and 3,000 Air National Guard members.

Enyart says, “Last September, they called us from Washington and said, ‘Stop recruiting — hold up.’”

In Missouri, the same story comes from Command Sgt. Maj. Jim Schulte, the highest-ranking enlisted man in his state’s Army National Guard. “We’re at 102 percent of strength and have told our recruiters to slow down,” Schulte says.

Like Illinois’ Enyart, Schulte concedes that recruiting had some bumps in the years just after Sept. 11, 2001. But now, Schulte says, “everybody in the National Guard today either enlisted or reenlisted knowing that they’re probably going to a combat zone.”

The numbers hold true nationally, says Rick Breitenfeldt of the Pentagon’s National Guard Bureau. “Recruiting and retention numbers are fantastic,” he says, with the Army Guard nationally at 363,000 soldiers and the Air Guard at 107,000 members. Indeed, in June, the Guard deliberately missed its goals so it could stay within the numbers authorized by Congress.

Most of the experts concede that today’s rocky economy helps recruiting and re-enlistments. Sociologist Segal says, “Many Guardsmen today are, in effect, economic conscripts.” The greenest Guard recruit pulls in \$179 for each one-weekend-a-month drill period. But most observers insist that Guard service goes beyond money.

Military writer and novelist Ralph Peters — he retired from the Army as a lieutenant colonel — says that in the Heartland, “some of the young men are coming home from the wars saying how cool it was — ‘Neat stuff, dude.’ They’ve got money, they’ve got combat patches, and casualties have been low in historic terms. Those elites on the East and West coasts underestimate the appeal of income and adventure to kids from the Midwest.”



U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Jason Blunck, a member of the Illinois National Guard, tosses an incendiary grenade into a field at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, Oct. 20, 2008.

A similar view comes from retired Army Reserve Col. Walter Schumm, who specializes in the armed forces as a sociologist at Kansas State University. He says that today's Guard soldiers are younger and more likely to be single. "You have a lot of young French Foreign Legion types looking for adventure."

Think-tank analyst James Carafano of the Washington-based Heritage Foundation retired from the Army as a lieutenant colonel. "Some of it's the economy," he says. "But the numbers were up even when the economy was doing well. When people feel their service is useful and productive, they tend to stay."

You'll hear much the same from the National Guard Association, a Washington-based private advocacy group. "The bad economy helps," says association spokesman John Goheen. "But people in the National Guard like what they're doing."

And even with the slumping economy, says Goheen, "you can't pay somebody enough to go to Afghanistan or Iraq."

Another plus for today's National Guard: a new reputation for military professionalism.

Writer Peters remembers working with the National Guard back in the mid-1980s, when Guard soldiers arrived at Army posts for their annual two-week training stints. "They were not ready for prime time," he says. Now? "It's all different now. They're much better trained, much better equipped."

Peters gets a second from national security consultant William Nash, who retired from the Army as a two-star general and later worked for the Council on Foreign Relations. "The National Guard has gotten very good," Nash says. "There's less and less disparity between their performance and that of the active-duty forces."

Since 9/11, the Illinois Guard has deployed 19,000 people. Among them, 9,700 soldiers and 8,800 airmen have deployed more than once. (Air National Guard deployments tend to be brief — often 60 or 90 days.)

Although Illinois Guard soldiers have fought in Iraq and Afghanistan, the only soldiers now deployed abroad are 480 artillerymen on peacekeeping duty in the Sinai Peninsula. The Illinois Air Guard has 280 members deployed in Iraq,

Afghanistan, Kuwait and Qatar. Although combat deployments to Iraq ended in August, through May, the Illinois Army Guard will send 340 soldiers to Afghanistan as an agricultural development team.

Was the National Guard meant to be deployed so much?

Military historian Morelock says: "Traditionally, in a major war, the National Guard would mobilize — and when it was over, they'd go home. The Guard was never intended to be a solution to the failed policies of the Army leadership and their civilian bosses. They've failed to maintain the active-duty Army to the level needed."

"That traces back to the end of the Cold War and pressure for a peace dividend. In 1980, the active-duty Army had 780,000 people. Now it has about 540,000 — and that's up from a low of 490,000."

When Gen. Eric Shinseki retired as Army chief of staff in 2003, he warned, "Beware the 12-division strategy for a 10-division Army." Today's active-duty Army has just 10 divisions. Segal, the Maryland sociologist, says, "If we're going to play the role in the global system that we've been playing, we need a bigger Army."

Peters, the military writer, believes that the current level of operations calls for an active-duty Army of 16 or 18 divisions.

Maj. Gen. Enyart of the Illinois Guard remembers when the citizen-soldiers of the National Guard formed a "strategic reserve," which he explains this way: "If the Russians rolled through the Fulda Gap in Germany, we would have had nine months to get there."

Indeed, after the Korean War, the National Guard largely saw no combat. For the Vietnam War, President Lyndon Johnson built a draftee Army and largely left the Guard at home. After Vietnam, the active-duty Army cut brigades from some of its divisions but tabbed National Guard brigades to "round out" those divisions in case of war. The Army also shifted many active-duty support jobs to the Army Reserve.

That shift to citizen-soldiers spared the Army from cutting whole divisions. Some analysts also think that in a "never again" fashion, the Army blindsided future presidents. The end of the draft in 1973 meant that no longer could a president go to war with an Army of anonymous conscripts. Instead, a president would have to mobi-

lize National Guard and Reserve units — our friends and neighbors in hometowns across America. And before the president could mobilize those friends and neighbors, he'd need the support of the American public.

Now, says Enyart, the National Guard functions as an "operational reserve." His definition: "My reading is that the leadership sees us as subject to deployment every four or five years."

Historian Morelock shakes his head at that prospect. "If we don't match active-duty strength with the missions we've taken on globally," he says, "we run the risk of eventually destroying the Guard."

But the Heritage Foundation's Carafano says: "Rather than asking whether the active Army is big enough, we ought to ask whether the National Guard and Reserve are big enough. They're flexible — when you don't need them, you can stand them down. They're a cheaper force to maintain. The National Guard has proved itself. I think we ought to give it the resources it needs."

Most of the analysts do see some downsides to the deployments. Peters says that although casualty rates are low, "people get killed and maimed." (The Illinois National Guard has lost 33 soldiers and one airman in Iraq and Afghanistan. Three died of accidents or natural causes, and three committed suicide. All the rest were killed in action.)

And constant deployments can set Guard members back in their civilian careers, although Enyart says many Illinois employers have been exceptionally supportive. He singles out State Farm Insurance in Bloomington as "marvelous."

Writer Peters notes that deployments strain the families left behind. "And it's harder on Guard families than on active-duty families. In the active Army, your husband is gone — but so is everybody else's. In the National Guard, you don't have the same level of understanding and empathy."

The University of Maryland's Segal says: "When an active Army soldier comes home to a military post, people know what he's been through. He has access to medics who know how to deal with post-traumatic stress disorder. But a Guard soldier goes back to a community that knows very little about the armed forces and has nobody trained in handling PTSD."



Soldiers with 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry Regiment, Illinois Army National Guard are assigned to a provincial reconstruction team's security forces platoon. Gardez, Afghanistan, April 13, 2009.

The Illinois Guard lacks numbers for PTSD cases, but a spokesman, Lt. Dusty Grove, notes that the National Guard Bureau says 18 percent of all those deployed — regular Army, National Guard and Army Reserve — “meet the criteria for PTSD.”

Enyart says Illinois was the first state to require screening of returning Guard members for traumatic brain injury. And he has precise statistics on another hot-button issue — suicide. Since 2003, the Illinois Guard has lost nine members to suicide; three of them had never gone to Iraq or Afghanistan.

“We’re struggling to find out why people commit suicide,” he says. He has ordered sergeants to keep a close eye on their people — but because National Guard soldiers live communally only when mobilized, spotting problems can be tough.

Finally, some people fret that with so many Guard members away on federal missions, the Guard may be unable to carry out state missions such as disaster relief. If we have a Great Flood of 2011, can the Illinois Guard respond the way it did in the Great Flood of ’93?

Enyart thinks so. “We got tested with the flood of 2008 along the northern Mississippi,” he says. “We had 4,000 Guard soldiers away training to go to Afghanistan. So we relied heavily on the Air National Guard, calling up 1,600 air-men.”

One of the 170-soldier infantry companies that went to Afghanistan was commanded by Capt. Christian Pedersen, 38, of Sherman, a small downstate community near Springfield. That call-up was Pedersen’s fourth since the 1990s, when he went to Bosnia for a year.

Back then, Pedersen was a National Guard medic who dreamed of going to medical school. But deployments kept delaying that dream. He was an infantry officer by the time he went to Fort Polk, La., in 2004-05, to Iraq in 2006-07 and then to Afghanistan in 2008-09.

“By the end of Iraq,” he says, “I knew my test scores for med school would fade.” But, he adds, “I really didn’t care about it any more.” His National Guard experience had changed him from a would-be doctor to an already-am soldier.

In Afghanistan, roadside bombs banged up seven of his soldiers. “But we had no deaths,” he says, “and no suicides.” He calls Afghanistan “a fantastic opportunity and a great experience.”

Now, Pedersen dons a uniform daily to work full time for the Illinois Guard at Springfield’s Camp Lincoln. He got married this summer, becoming the stepfather of a 7-year-old boy. Will his new family status make him leery of deploying again?

“There’s a significant tax on our emotional bank account,” he says. But his father-in-law retired from the Illinois National Guard as a command sergeant major, meaning his wife accepts Pedersen’s military side.

“Illinois is likely to be tagged for another large-scale deployment,” Pedersen says. “I’ve told my wife and family that if the deployment is significant, and if I can have an important position, I want to go.”

Harry Levins covered military issues for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch from 1990 until he retired in 2007. In 1964-65, Levins served in Germany as an Army lieutenant of infantry.

A not very blue mood

The GOP is poised to make a comeback in governor, U.S. Senate races

by Jamey Dunn

Photographs by Jamey Dunn

“**W**hat a great day to be a Republican, isn’t it? And what a great state to be a Republican in.”

The Republican candidate for governor, Sen. Bill Brady, greeted the cheering crowd at the Illinois State Fair Republican Day rally with that statement. Polling indicates that this may not just be an optimistic rallying of the troops. Republicans appear to be making a comeback in Illinois, and the governor’s office, some statewide executive positions and a U.S. Senate seat are within their reach.

That is a big change from the 2008 general election, when Illinois Democrats were riding high as one of their own, Barack Obama, was elected president. Democrats now hold all constitutional executive offices, both U.S. Senate seats and a majority in both chambers of the General Assembly.

Since 1946 every first-term president’s party has lost seats in the U.S. Congress except Republicans in the 2002 mid-term elections. Christopher Mooney, a political scientist with the University of Illinois-based Institute of Government and Public Affairs, says this year could be especially hard on Democrats nationwide because of Obama’s 2008 popularity. Voters who flocked to the polls for Obama gave the whole ticket a boost, but many of them may stay home this time around.

Illinois Democrats are fighting for their political lives, thanks to an economic downturn that has led to double-digit unemployment that tops the national average, an unprecedented state budget deficit



Gov. Pat Quinn talks with reporters as he marches in the parade kicking off the state fair.

and the flashy political corruption trial of former Gov. Rod Blagojevich.

Obama’s declining popularity means that being associated with him is not the political asset it was once. The race for his former U.S. Senate seat is close and dirty, with each candidate hurling accusations about his opponent’s character.

“We all know that the voters of Illinois — the voters of the nation — are very volatile. We all know about the mood swings that have occurred over the last several months. We all know that we are looking at a very competitive election — very competitive — for the U.S. Senate, for governor, constitutional officers and members of the legislature. We all know that there’s a huge scandal hanging over our heads,” says Illinois House Speaker

Mike Madigan, chairman of the state Democratic party.

When Brady was declared the winner of the Republican primary — beating by less than 200 votes Sen. Kirk Dillard, who had the endorsement of his former boss Gov. Jim Edgar — political commentators in Illinois said Gov. Pat Quinn had gotten the opponent he would have the best chance to beat in the general election.

Quinn had barely eked out a victory over his primary challenger, state Comptroller Dan Hynes, winning by a few thousand votes. Issues from that primary — such as an early release program known as MGT Push, which put some violent offenders back on the streets after serving only weeks of their prison sentences — continue to dog him in the general elec-

tion. He says he was not aware that violent criminals were included in the program and put a stop to it once it came to his attention.

Quinn's campaign has made several missteps, and he has been accused of lacking a consistent message. "He's just run at this point such an unfocused, almost non-campaign," says Kent Redfield, an emeritus professor at the University of Illinois Springfield.

Redfield says voter demographics in the state are on Quinn's side. "There's kind of a political demographics to Illinois that it is a blue state. The Democratic base is bigger than the Republican base. ... Downstate is becoming more and more Republican but losing population. Chicago is stable and more Democratic than ever. ... All things being equal, he should certainly beat a conservative Republican."

However, Redfield says, "Short term ... none of this matters because the state has been in such a horrendous mess fiscally, and Quinn has done nothing to demonstrate that he is a tremendous break from what got us to this point."

Quinn has been praised by some for backing unpopular solutions to the state's estimated \$13 billion budget deficit. He called for a combination of cuts, borrowing and a 1-percentage-point income tax increase to fill the hole.

"I think people have a choice. They have a governor who tells the truth before the election. ... The other guy just wants to tell a bunch of fairy tales and raise your taxes, especially your property taxes, after the election," Quinn says.

But Quinn has gotten little help from the General Assembly in moving his fiscal plans forward. The Senate put off until after the election a vote on \$4 billion in borrowing to make the state's required pension payment for this fiscal year. Quinn's budget director, David Vaught, has said publicly that the administration plans to push for an income tax increase after the election, but Madigan says he has no plan to pass one. Without the speaker's backing, Quinn's so-called surcharge for education stands little chance of making it in the House.

Not being able to corral votes behind some of the biggest pieces of his agenda has called to question Quinn's ability to govern.

Despite having spent more than a decade in the General Assembly, Brady is selling himself as an outsider candidate, saying his experience as a business owner qualifies him to tackle Illinois' budget problems.

Brady heads construction and realty businesses, which have taken losses during the recession and the collapse of the housing market. Because of that, Brady paid no state or federal income taxes in 2008 and no federal income taxes in 2009. He took advantage of a 2009 federal provision geared at helping small businesses make it through the recession by allowing the sale of assets. Quinn has criticized Brady for collecting a public salary from his position as state senator, while not paying taxes on that income.

Brady is calling for \$1 billion in tax cuts, including eliminating the estate tax and gasoline tax. However, he has not been forthcoming with other details of his bud-

Hunting season

This fall, Republicans in the General Assembly also hope to capitalize on an incumbent- and scandal-weary electorate

by Mike Riopell

Just four years ago, Illinois Democrats thundered to a dominant victory at the polls.

Boosted by momentum at the national level that delivered control of Congress to the Democrats, the party picked up six seats in the Illinois Senate and two in the state House, not to mention every statewide office in Illinois.

Their margin of control in the Senate grew to a 15-vote gap — 37-22. They had so much control, it looked as if they stuck together, Democrats in that chamber wouldn't need Republicans to override gubernatorial vetoes.

It was that mid-term election in 2006 that helped deliver seats to Democrats in the Chicago suburbs that had been held by Republicans for years.



Photograph courtesy of the Flider campaign

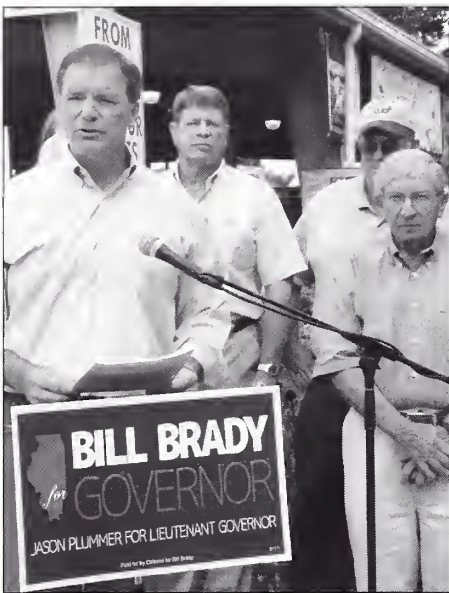
State Rep. Robert Flider, a Democrat from Mt. Zion, (second from left) is running for re-election.

Then in 2008, Democrats in the Illinois House picked up three more seats on the heels of nearly unprecedented enthusiasm for Illinois Democrat Barack Obama's presidential campaign. They now hold a 70-48 margin over the GOP.

It was a good run for Illinois Democrats. But things are different now.

It's a mid-term election year again. The economy is in bad shape, and Democrats control all levels of state government. Voters worried about where their next paycheck might come from may be once again ready to take out that worry on incumbents. And in the Illinois General Assembly, there is an abundance of Democratic incumbents.

Republicans hope to use anger over the economy, the state's



State Sen. Bill Brady, Republican candidate for governor, speaks at the state fair.

get plan, saying only that he wants to “cut a dime on every dollar of government spending.” He says he wants to conduct an audit of all state spending, and only after that will he be able to pinpoint specific cuts.

budget disaster and former Democratic Gov. Rod Blagojevich to make amends for the big Democratic wins in previous years.

Democrats used waves of support in 2006 and 2008 to pick up seats for which they would otherwise have been unlikely contenders. This year, without that fanfare, they might become unlikely contenders in those districts once again.

It could be that some incumbents might, in a way, become victims of their own success. Democrats have so many seats in the Illinois General Assembly that they’re almost certain to lose some of them, says University of Illinois political scientist Christopher Mooney.

“What that means is that they’re kind of exposed,” Mooney says.

Some Republicans are talking about a different mid-term election in creating their narrative. In 1994, Republicans took the Illinois House, relegating Democratic Speaker Michael Madigan to his only two years in the minority party since taking control in 1983.

To take back the Illinois House or Senate in 2010 would be a huge undertaking. The Republicans would have to pick up 12 seats in the House. That means they would have to win many of the races they have targeted — and not lose others.

Republicans in the Senate would need eight seats, an even steeper undertaking in the 59-member chamber.

Still, the GOP hopes to at least make gains in both chambers. The final tally in each — and the results of the race for governor — will determine how the state approaches its \$13 billion deficit, a handful of controversial social issues and any attempts to boost the economy in the next two years.

He has claimed to be able to balance the budget next year without a tax increase, while avoiding massive layoffs in education. That task could prove difficult, since education makes up about a quarter of all state spending. Brady said he would consider axing entire programs and that every state program is on the table for such cuts.

“The more that Brady has a lead, the more that Quinn continues to have problems ... then there is less pressure on Brady to be specific on what we need to do other than ‘we need change,’ and that’s not much different than Obama’s agenda,” Redfield says.

Brady, a social conservative, has started to gear his rhetoric toward more moderate voters. For instance, he recently said that while he is anti-abortion, he would have little ability to affect abortion policy as governor.

Redfield says that Republicans of all stripes have become strictly unified in support of Brady, while Quinn is having trouble with his political base, much as John McCain did during the 2008 presidential election.

“You paper over lots of stuff if you have a chance to come back from being out in the wilderness. Now, we have kind of the mirror opposite of [the 2008 election] in Illinois because Republicans have been out in the wilderness. ... They don’t need Brady to be Obama. They just need Brady to not screw up.”

Meanwhile, the Democratic candidate vying for Obama’s former Senate seat is struggling in his race. State Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias claimed his current office with support from then U.S. Sen. Obama (with whom he plays basketball) and even has a public speaking style that is reminiscent of the president. But the collapse of the Giannoulias-family-owned Broadway Bank in Chicago — coupled with his relatively short resume, which includes time as an executive at the bank — has become a difficult campaign issue to overcome.

The race for U.S. Senate has often boiled down to job creation and economic philosophy — more specifically, government stimulus vs. deficit reduction.

The electoral battles will be fought largely in Chicago’s suburbs, with a handful of skirmishes downstate.

Perhaps two of the most heated races will come from the Elgin area in the western suburbs, where two former Republican lawmakers are trying to win their seats back.

In 2008, Republican Ruth Munson lost her House seat in the 43rd District by fewer than 400 votes to Democrat Keith Farnham. The Republican momentum in 2010 and Farnham’s narrow margin of victory two years ago have the GOP thinking they can get Munson back into the House.

That district is within the boundaries of Democrat state Sen. Mike Noland’s 22nd Senate District, where one of the top battles for that chamber may take place.

The seat was held for years by Republican Steve Rauschenberger, who left the Senate after a failed bid to be lieutenant governor in 2006. Now, he wants his old seat back.

During his time in the Senate, Rauschenberger was considered a budget expert, and he might use that reputation on the campaign trail at a time when the state’s finances are in shambles.

He admits that an out-of-balance state budget is usually not the kind of issue that draws average voters to the polls. But now, the state’s delinquencies have led to possible teacher layoffs and other effects that hit closer to home.

“I think that’s what’s gotten people,” Rauschenberger says. “That’s what makes it real.”

Noland, even though he’s the incumbent, has campaigned door-to-door trying to portray Rauschenberger as an incumbent. Although Noland holds the seat now, Rauschenberger occupied it for more than a decade.

"Obviously as the junior [U.S.] senator from Illinois with an office next to the bathroom, it's not going to be easy to change the world in one day. But I do think we need to have a laser-like focus on creating jobs. ... Folks are getting crushed out there," Giannoulas says.

Giannoulas' opponent, U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, agrees that job loss is one of the most important issues of the race. He says he fears of tax increases are making businesses hesitant to hire new employees.

"There's a lot of gotcha politics going on, and that is not the key issue. The key issue in this contest is the economy. ... I think there's a lot of, especially small business, employers who are very scared about what our state legislature will do right after the election and what the [U.S.] Congress will do right after the election."

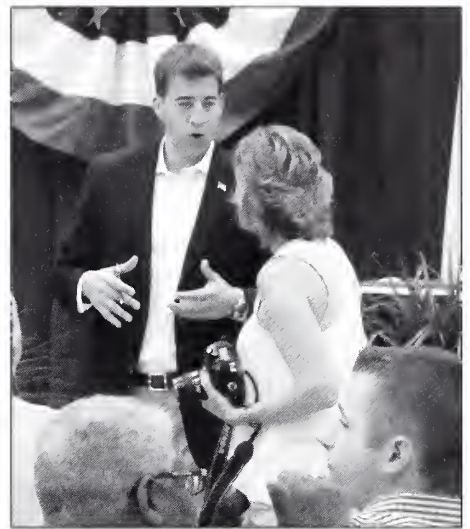
Kirk has his own baggage in the campaign. He has made multiple apologies for embellishing his military service and now refuses to discuss his record with the media. He has also been accused of inaccurately describing his time working

at a nursery school and adding dramatic details to a personal story about being rescued by the Coast Guard as a teenager, which he said inspired his military career.

Giannoulas has criticized Kirk for saying he would support — and then voting against — a \$26.1 billion spending bill that included education funds to help reinstate thousands of teachers laid off by struggling states nationwide and money for Medicaid.

"Here is an opportunity to save up to 6,000 teachers in Illinois ... help make sure people have their jobs and are paying their mortgages and going to the grocery store, and Mark Kirk voted against that after saying he would vote for it. ... That's a very telling vote," he says.

But Kirk says Democrats' claim that the bill would save money is inaccurate, and that it would actually increase the deficit. "I said I was inclined to support it because I want to help people. But unlike a lot of members of [U.S.] Congress, I went back to Washington and I actually read the bill. ... More taxes, more debt, unrelated spending — I couldn't support it."



State Treasurer Alexi Giannoulas, a Democrat, is running for the U.S. Senate.

He supports extending the income tax cuts backed by former President George Bush that are set to expire in January and wants to do so by making cuts elsewhere. Kirk supports cutting entire programs, giving the president the power to cut the budget with a line-item veto and targeting so-called pork projects. "I am a centrist,

Photograph courtesy of the Brown campaign



Republican candidate Adam Brown of Decatur is running against State Rep. Robert Flider of Mt. Zion.

And as Republicans try to needle their opponents for the state's financial troubles, Noland will tout that he voted against the most recent budget.

"I tell them I'm a freshman," Noland says. "They don't view me as part of the problem."

Noland is also trying to deflect Blagojevich's stigma the same way Gov. Pat Quinn is, by saying he sponsored a constitutional amendment that could allow voters to recall public officials from office.

Blagojevich's role in the election, though, is unclear. The Democrats' recent string of victories could be traced back to 2002, when Blagojevich was first elected on the heels of former Gov. George Ryan's very public ethical problems.

It would seem Republicans could follow the same playbook to a similar result. But Democrats have been trying to deflect criticism by talking as much as Republicans about Blagojevich.

"We're the party in this state that had the guts to impeach and remove our own governor," Democratic state Rep. John Bradley yelled to an Illinois State Fair crowd in August.

Democratic incumbents likely also will focus on ethics and campaign finance reforms enacted in the past two years.

And while there hasn't been a lot of good news when it comes to the state budget, they'll try to highlight a handful of accomplishments.

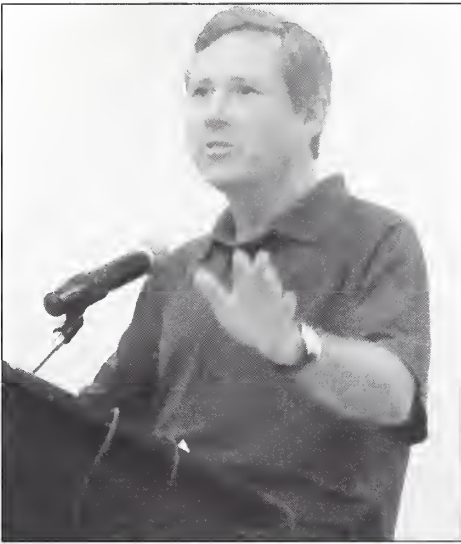
First, Democrats have had the opportunity to cut ribbons across the state thanks to their 2009 approval of a capital construction program. Taking credit for new roads and buildings can help incumbent lawmakers, but they'll have to deal with criticism that they raised vehicle fees and legalized video poker to get it done.

Democrats led reforms to the state's pension system this year, as well. The General Assembly and Quinn approved new rules that raise the retirement age for most new state workers, a move intended to lessen Illinois' crippling pension debt in the years down the road.

The problem for Democrats is that those reforms don't immediately save any teaching jobs or get medical providers paid any sooner.

"You don't see immediate savings," says Democratic state Rep. Robert Flider. "But, boy, will it make a difference down the road."

Flider is one of several possible downstate targets for Republicans. Republican Decatur City Council member Adam Brown is challenging the four-term lawmaker from Mount Zion.



U.S. Rep Mark Kirk, a Republican, is running for U.S. Senate.

so I'm a fiscal conservative but a social moderate. ... I would say that a vast majority of Americans are fiscal conservatives and social moderates," Kirk says.

However, U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin says Kirk cannot claim a moderate title because he has never crossed the aisle to support

Obama on big issues, such as health care reform and financial industry regulation. "Frankly, whoever my colleague is in the U.S. Senate is either going to be an active partner in moving America forward, or is going to cancel my vote," he says.

Kirk and Giannoulas have been playing leapfrog in the polls. Their Green Party challenger, LeAlan Jones is also drawing attention from potential voters. As of press time, Raleigh, N.C.-based Public Policy Polling had Giannoulas in the lead with 37 percent of the vote to Kirk's 35 percent. Jones had 9 percent. Brady led Quinn 39 percent to 30 percent, and Green candidate for governor, Rich Whitney, had 11 percent. The poll did not include independent candidate for governor, Scott Lee Cohen, who stepped down as Quinn's running mate after a media storm over allegations of domestic violence and drug abuse.

Interestingly enough, the statewide chairmen for each party make a similar appeal for votes: they're not the other guy.

"[Republicans offer] competent management of the state's affairs. We've seen eight years of single-party Democratic

rule, and we've seen the state go into the tank. If you like the way the state's been run the last eight years, and you want four more of it, vote for Pat Quinn. But if not, I think it's time for something different," says Pat Brady, Illinois Republican Party chairman.

Madigan says: "The other political party ... is a do-nothing, dropout group of people. They mimic what [House Minority Leader John] Boehner and the Republicans do in the U.S. Senate: Do nothing. Do nothing."

Republicans may be experiencing resurgence in Illinois, but Redfield says it could be short-lived. "The long-term demographics work against Republicans. ... We could revert back to form two years from now if the economy picks up [and] Obama is suddenly back [up] in the polls again. ... The wind could be at the back of the Democrats' sails in two years."

He adds that Democrats should expect to lose some offices in November, and Republicans may have a shot at shaping the state's political agenda for the first time in eight years. □

Flider has publicly opposed tax increases, but Brown will likely attack Democrats in general on the issue, anyway.

At 25 years old, Brown is a relatively young hopeful for office. And while he likes Republicans' chances in November, he shares the worry many in the party do: that angry voters will stay away from the polls altogether instead of showing up to vote out incumbents.

"I think the fear for us is that they will become inactive," Brown said. "I want them to be active."

While Brown is taking on a veteran incumbent, 2010 could see many of the hot races focus on open seats and freshmen lawmakers.

In the Senate, Republicans could take a look at the 31st District, represented by freshman state Sen. Michael Bond.

The House, though, appears to have more opportunities for tight races. The retirements of Democrats Paul Froehlich in the 56th District, Mike Boland in the 71st and Betsy Hannig in the 98th could provide a free-for-all for both sides.

Democratic freshmen who could be targeted include Farnham, Mark Walker in the 66th District, Emily McAsey in the 85th and Jehán Gordon in the 92nd District.

A House takeover in particular for the GOP will mean they can't lose many races. They might have to play serious defense in the suburban 17th House District now occupied by state Rep. Beth Coulson, for example. She's leaving the General Assembly after a failed primary bid for Congress.

And downstate in the Senate, Democrats are eying the 51st Senate District. They want to unseat Republican state Sen. Kyle

McCarter, a freshman who was appointed to the term he's serving now.

The Lebanon business owner was appointed to replace former Senate Minority Leader Frank Watson of Greenville after Watson suffered a stroke in late 2008.

McCarter is banking on a rigid anti-taxes message to keep his seat.

"I'm going to keep repeating until I'm tired of hearing myself," McCarter says.

He's opposed by Democrat Tim Dudley, a Macon County Board member and businessman. Dudley is in a little different position than many contending Democrats. He's trying to win a seat for the first time, while incumbents try to hold onto theirs.

Dudley says that some issues facing incumbent Democrats in 2010 might not affect him as much because he's never served in the General Assembly.

"I think that it's a huge plus for me that I wasn't in there when all that happened," Dudley said.

The extent to which Republicans can capitalize on some of the woes of incumbents and Democrats will be the story November 3, the day after the election.

Trends may emerge statewide, but each individual race will be fought on local airwaves and door-to-door, Mooney says. Still, Republicans appear to have the upper hand so far.

"They've got to feel good about their position," Mooney says. □

Mike Riopell is a Springfield-based reporter for Lee Enterprises.

One judge, one race

Republicans target a Supreme Court justice who is up for retention

by Abdon Pallasch

At Republican Day at the State Fair in Springfield in August, party chairman Pat Brady focused fairgoers' attention on the targets you'd expect: Gov. Quinn's tax hike proposal, Mike Madigan's control of the House. But then he launched into one you might not: "For those of you who live down here, there's a Supreme Court race coming — Justice Kilbride," he shouted, standing next to a fluttering three-story American flag. "Justice Kilbride. If you believe in America and free enterprise, vote NO on Justice Kilbride — take my word for that."

Bill Brady, Republican candidate for governor and no relation to the party chairman, likewise urges a "No" vote.

Four of the seven justices of the Supreme Court of Illinois are running for retention November 2. That means they must get 60 percent "yes" votes from voters for another 10-year term. Judge Thomas Kilbride was something of an upset a decade ago when he took the state's 3rd Supreme Court District, which runs from the Quad Cities to Kankakee.

The state is split into five districts for electing Supreme Court justices. The districts outside Chicagoland each elect one justice — now all Republicans except for Kilbride. Cook County elects three justices — all Democrats. Two of those Democrats are up for retention this year: Charles Freeman and Chief Justice Tom Fitzgerald. However, in early



Supreme Court Justice Thomas Kilbride

September, Fitzgerald announced plans to retire later this month and will be replaced by Appellate Justice Mary Jane Theis, who will serve a two-year term. Kilbride will succeed Fitzgerald as chief justice on October 26. Also running is former Bears kicker Bob Thomas, a Republican elected from the DuPage County-based 2nd District.

So on this year's ballot, the only potentially vulnerable justice appears to be Kilbride, even though Fitzgerald, not Kilbride, wrote a controversial opinion throwing out tort reform.

But Kilbride provided the Democrats with a fourth or fifth vote on the court, useful for shooting down tort reform,

limits on jury awards against doctors, hospitals and big businesses and other legislation popular with business leaders. No one has ever taken out a sitting Supreme Court judge in Illinois in a retention election before, but business leaders pledge to give it a try this time.

If Kilbride is not retained, the Supreme Court justices would appoint a temporary replacement judge for two years until the next election in 2012.

Business leaders, through the Illinois Civil Justice League, plan to spend \$1 million trying to get voters in the 3rd District to vote "No" on Kilbride, says the league's director, Ed Murnane.

"I know there are some interest groups that are out there, that are trying to skew my record," Kilbride says. "There's a coming campaign against me."

Cindi Canary, executive director of the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform, says a campaign to oust Kilbride might lay low until the very end: "My guess is if we see huge expenditure in that race, we're really not going to see it 'til October; it will come late in the game."

Some Republican veterans say they don't really expect to topple Kilbride, but if they mount a campaign of a million dollars or more, Illinois will once again become a focus of attention in the growing national debate over whether heavy spending to "buy" state Supreme Court seats subverts justice.

The last time was 2004, when an election was set to replace the only other

downstate Democrat, Moses Harrison, who had retired two years earlier. Trial lawyers and Democrats spent \$4.5 million trying to replace Harrison with Democrat Gordon Maag. Business groups, insurance companies, doctors and others came up with \$4.8 million to elect Republican Lloyd Karmeier to the seat. At the time, the race broke all national records for spending for a state Supreme Court seat.

"In 2004, there was a race for the Illinois Supreme Court, right here," retired U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor told a meeting of the Chicago Bar Association in May. "It cost just over \$9 million for that race. As you might have guessed, the winner of that race got his biggest contributions from a company that had an appeal pending before the Illinois Supreme Court. You like that?"

After joining the court, Karmeier waived off conflict-of-interest concerns and voted — as part of a unanimous court — to throw out a \$1.2 billion class-action suit against State Farm Insurance, which had given Karmeier \$350,000. He was also part of a 4-2 majority that dismissed a \$10 billion verdict against tobacco giant Philip Morris.

"Sounds a lot like the Caperton case, doesn't it?" O'Connor said, referring to a West Virginia case in which the U.S. Supreme Court determined that a judge was out of line ruling on behalf of a mining company that had largely funded his campaign.

In Karmeier's situation, Illinois' Judicial Inquiry Board found no ethical violation in his participation in the cases.

"The single greatest threat [to the judiciary] is the flood of money coming into our courtrooms by way of increasingly expensive and volatile judicial campaigns," O'Connor said.

JUSTPAC, the Illinois Civil Justice League's political action committee, has this message on its website about Kilbride:

"Just how extreme is Illinois Supreme Court Justice Thomas Kilbride? He wanted new trials for 25 death row inmates — many of whom were convicted of violent murders. That's right — he supported new trials for every one of the 25 death penalty cases being reconsidered under new rules of evidence. ... He also ruled in favor of the rights of convicted felons — and against the police — in 81 percent of the split decisions on which he has ruled."

So why has the Illinois' Fraternal Order of Police endorsed Kilbride?

"Over the course of this election, I recognize some critics may attempt to skew Judge Kilbride's record to suit their own purposes," FOP President Ted Street says. "Illinois citizens should know Illinois police have examined the totality of Judge Kilbride's body of work, and we know Judge Kilbride has our back."

Seeing the fight that could be coming his way, Kilbride spends his weekends meeting voters at county fairs and festivals, trying to assure them he rules on the law, not on anyone's politics.

"My 21-county district spans the width of the state along I-80, down to Peoria, so there's no way physically to reach everybody," Kilbride says.

Though the district has been Republican in the past, Kilbride says he gets a good reception wherever he goes. The retention election is nonpartisan, but

when someone pushes him about his party registration, he asks them, "If you come to court, should I have the court bailiff run your voting record before we hear your case?" Now, at that point, someone who might be staunchly leaning one way or another will say, "Well, you do have a point."

Meeting with voters every 10 years can be a healthy thing "if we engage in a conversation about the independence of the judiciary," Kilbride says. "It allows voters to evaluate and consider the totality of any judge's record. And that's good. What I'm concerned about is the politicization of judicial elections. That is not, in my mind, in the best interests of good government."

The Illinois Democratic Party put money and staff into getting Kilbride elected 10 years ago. But Steve Brown, spokesman for party chairman Mike Madigan, waved off the pair of Bradys' threats against Kilbride, saying, "Having a Brady against you in Illinois, I'm not sure it means a lot." □

Abdon M. Pallasch covers politics and law for the Chicago Sun-Times.

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Future vision

Report sets out to be a planning guide for 21st century northeastern Illinois

by Gerald Bennett and Randy Blankenhorn

Metropolitan Chicago is one of the world's great economic centers. We have abundant natural resources — including a magnificent system of parks, open spaces, trails and waterways — with access to Lake Michigan for drinking water and recreation. We have a transportation system that moves people and goods, acting as an engine of jobs and prosperity. And the residents of the region themselves are perhaps our greatest renewable resource, constituting a diverse workforce that fuels economic development.

But we cannot take our quality of life for granted in the years to come. Stark new economic and environmental realities require the region and its communities to set priorities carefully. Residents of our

region's seven counties — Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will — aspire to and deserve a high quality of life. The mission of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is to help the counties and their 284 communities plan together for sustainable prosperity through mid-century and beyond.

Most of our region's near-term challenges are the direct result of choices made — or too often deferred — in the past. Urgent challenges have often been an excuse to avoid planning, but they actually reinforce the need to plan more effectively. During decades of rapid but largely unplanned expansion, the region grew in patterns that were not sustainable:

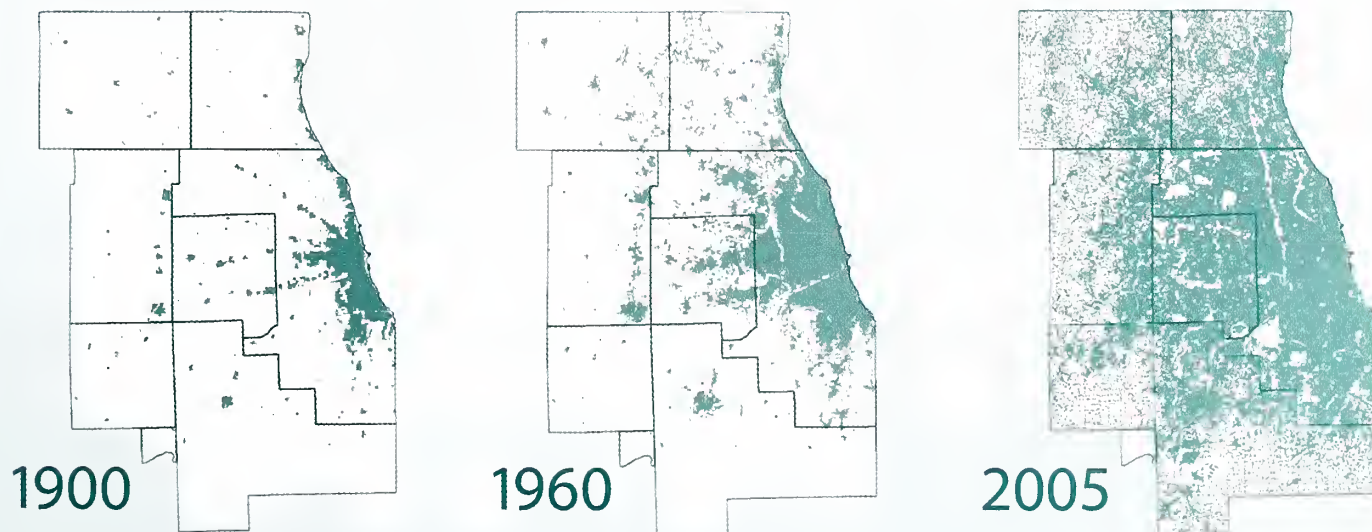
- New homes cropped up in areas that

were difficult to reach by automobile and virtually impossible by public transit.

- Jobs created were often far from the region's residential centers, keeping commuters tied up in traffic and wasting billions of dollars in lost time and fuel.
- Patterns of development consumed land at a rapid rate, with serious implications for natural resources — including less open space, potential water shortages, and diminished air quality.

Long-range trends such as these are barriers to the prosperity and livability of this region and its communities. We need to act now, before today's opportunities become tomorrow's crises.

Development of land in northeastern Illinois



Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and CMAP

GO TO 2040 is the official comprehensive plan for the Chicago region, developed by CMAP after extensive research and deliberation, along with the involvement of numerous area leaders and residents. It calls for investment in existing communities and emphasizes development that is more compact and livable. By implementing GO TO 2040, residents would have more options for getting around, more options for housing, more jobs nearer to where they live, more parks and open space, more plentiful and cleaner water, healthier air and better quality of life.

The GO TO 2040 plan, which can be found at www.cmap.illinois.gov/2040, is organized in four thematic chapters that include 12 high-priority recommendations: Livable Communities, Human Capital, Efficient Governance and Regional Mobility. Each chapter distills critically important strategies for achieving clear and measurable outcomes, and this article highlights some of the many recommendations that the plan describes in much greater detail.

Livable communities have a strength and vitality that attract people to them. Though opinions differ on what makes a community appealing, livable communities tend to share some common traits: They are healthy, safe and walkable. They offer choices for timely transportation to schools, jobs, services and basic needs. They are more cost-effective for individuals and local governments. And they make the region more economically competitive. Livable communities are created through effective planning and decisions by local officials, developers and individual residents.

The recommendation area titled "Achieve Greater Livability Through Land Use and Housing" seeks to help and encourage local governments to apply principles of livability when they make development decisions, which should include comprehensive plans, consistent

ordinances and other regulations and trained decision makers. GO TO 2040 recommends that CMAP and its partners provide technical assistance, supplemented with grants for local planning or ordinance updates.

"Manage and Conserve Water and Energy Resources" highlights the need to maximize the energy efficiency of new buildings while retrofitting existing buildings. Water conservation goals should be integrated with land use planning, green infrastructure can be used to manage storm water, and groundwater-dependent com-

MetroPulse web repository

Local governments have good reason to increase the availability of their data, despite legitimate concerns about cost, staff capacity, liability, privacy and security. The cost of inefficient and ineffective efforts to find data that is not readily accessible far outweighs the expense of providing data. CMAP's technical assistance will help governments and other organizations across the seven counties openly share their data with each other and with the public.

One way public bodies can share and use this data will be through the Regional Indicators Project's new MetroPulse website (www.metropulsechicago.org), a powerful, innovative system for tracking economic, environmental, social and cultural variables that are essential measures of sustainable prosperity. CMAP and the Chicago Community Trust are partners in the project, which develops tools to help understand how investment decisions affect the region, even at the community level.

An indicator is a quantitative measure that describes an economic, environmental, social or cultural condition over time. Examples include the unemployment rate, infant mortality rates, number of new business start-ups or air quality indices.

This new website will allow our region to carefully gauge its progress implementing GO TO 2040. Together, CMAP and the Trust have developed a comprehensive system of key indicators for measuring and tracking regional quality of life over time in the seven counties of metropolitan Chicago. To be launched on November 17, MetroPulse will be a tool for policy makers, community leaders, news media and the general public to gather objective data that can inform their work. □

munities should consider shifting to surface water supplies.

"Expand and Improve Parks and Open Space" advocates for maintaining and improving our region's existing outlets while making significant, criteria-based investments in expanding parks and open space. Park accessibility and equity should be increased in developed areas, our region's more important natural areas should be preserved, and greenways should connect parks and preserves for recreational use and ecosystem function.

"Promote Sustainable Local Food" emphasizes the importance of local production of food and its benefits, such as preserving farmland and increasing urban agricultural opportunities. The plan calls for eliminating "food deserts" (areas without retail outlets that carry fresh food) and linking anti-hunger programs to local food production.

The chapter on "Human Capital" describes how the quality of our region's labor force is crucial for sustaining economic prosperity. Increasingly, job growth relies on the availability of skilled workers for knowledge-based industries. The seven counties can gain a significant advantage by ensuring that businesses and residents here have the skills necessary to compete with other global economic centers. Its recommendation area titled "Improve Education and Workforce Development" highlights the need to coordinate between our region's development systems and the needs of employers. Community colleges and other organizations that offer workforce training have a large role to play in this.

"Support Economic Innovation" recommends targeting clusters of regional specialization to correct issues of fragmentation and unfocused investment throughout industries; improving systems for collecting, tracking, and analyzing important measures; and establishing better linkages and training among diverse groups, such as

researchers and entrepreneurs.

As described in the "Efficient Governance" chapter, taxpayers expect efficiency and transparency when governments invest their limited resources. To maximize the benefits that residents of our seven counties see from these public investments, government agencies across our region need to coordinate decisions strategically. Better access to information will help us reach these goals by putting essential data at the fingertips of not only our local decision makers but also the residents they serve.

“Reform State and Local Tax Policy” calls for formation of a Regional Tax Policy Task Force to analyze state and local tax issues because current policies fail to satisfy the most important principles of good tax policy: efficiency, equity and transparency. “Improve Access to Information” supports one of the plan’s highest priorities: the open sharing of information. (See sidebar on MetroPulse.)

The recommendation area, “Pursue Coordinated Investments,” recognizes that policy areas can no longer be addressed in vacuums. Issues such as land use, transportation and the environment are interconnected. Governments should pursue efficiencies through increased coordination, communication and — where appropriate — consolidation.

The chapter on “Regional Mobility” reflects the fact that a modern transportation system is indispensable for our region’s future prosperity. To sustain our economy and quality of life, residents must be able to travel quickly and easily around our region so they can choose from a wide variety of jobs and communities in which to live. Businesses must be able to count on the timely delivery of their goods. Historically, our region’s transportation system has been a foundation of our success. But the system’s infrastructure was built decades ago, with inadequate ongoing investment to keep it up to date. While transportation is still a significant strength of the region, we must modernize our system to compete with other U.S. and global economic centers.

The recommendation area titled “Invest Strategically in Transportation” emphasizes the necessity to develop — at the federal, state, regional and local levels — innovative financing mechanisms, such as congestion pricing, to support a world-class transportation system. Performance-driven criteria, not arbitrary formulas, should determine which projects are financed, and priority should go toward maintaining and modernizing our current system, rather than expanding it. This part of the plan also describes proposed capital projects that were carefully selected to achieve clear regional objectives.

“Increase Commitment to Public Transit” strives to make transit the preferred travel option for as many residents as possible, and to do this, additional funding is needed. GO TO 2040 recommends new

revenue, such as an increase in the state gasoline tax, to help fund the transit system. Land use planning and small-scale infrastructure improvements should also be made to support transit.

“Create a More Efficient Freight Network” suggests creation of a federal plan and funding to address freight nationally. GO TO 2040 calls for the full funding and implementation of the Chicago Region Environmental Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) program to reduce freight bottlenecks and raise operating speeds through strategic rail improvements.

In addition to the four central themes and 12 recommendation areas, the plan also includes sections that describe challenges and opportunities, along with best practices for implementing GO TO 2040 recommendations in various contexts — from federal reforms to actions by local governments, businesses and even individual residents. Designed to guide development and infrastructure decisions through mid-century and beyond, GO TO 2040 takes a forceful but nuanced approach to aligning the region’s public


policies and investments to achieve sustainable prosperity.

After nearly three years of research, public input and deliberation, GO TO 2040 reflects the collective will of our region’s leaders and residents. CMAP will aggressively lead the implementation of GO TO 2040, our region’s first comprehensive plan since Daniel Burnham’s in 1909. Implementing the plan is metropolitan Chicago’s best chance to set the stage for economic growth in decades to come.




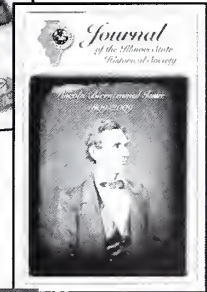
The region can no longer afford not to plan effectively. Now is the time for all stakeholders of the seven-county region to emphasize our common interests and look beyond our short-term concerns to strive toward the long-term vision articulated in the GO TO 2040 comprehensive regional plan. As we face new challenges and opportunities together, GO TO 2040 can lead us to prosperity that is sustainable for generations to come. □

Palos Hills Mayor Gerald Bennett is board chairman of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, and Randy Blankenhorn is the agency’s executive director.

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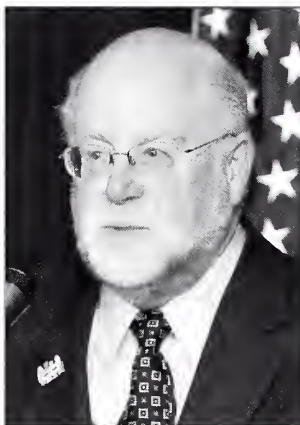
Stermer resigns in wake of probe

Michelle Saddler, former secretary of the Illinois Department of Human Services, is now Gov. Pat Quinn's chief of staff.

Quinn's former chief of staff, **Jerry Stermer**, resigned unexpectedly after the *Chicago Sun-Times* reported on an internal probe into campaign-related emails sent from Stermer's state account. Stermer sent three such emails and later reported himself to Quinn's inspector general, James Wright. Wright issued a report recommending that Attorney General Lisa Madigan file a complaint against Stermer before the state Executive Ethics Commission. A member of Quinn's staff notified Wright that he was being replaced on the same day he turned in his report.

At a Chicago news conference held to announce Saddler's appointment, Quinn adamantly denied allegations that there was a connection between the report and the decision to replace Wright: "It is false. It has not a shred of truth." He said Wright was given notice in the morning on August 13, and that he was not aware that Wright's report had been issued until that evening. Quinn said his office had been looking for a new inspector general since March and had interviewed Wright's replacement, **Ricardo Meza**, in late June.

Stermer likely faced a suspension for his ethics violations, according to



Jerry Stermer

Quinn. "I feel very badly for Jerry because he is an exemplary public servant. He made a couple of mistakes. ... He was willing to take whatever discipline would be administered."

Instead, Stermer, former president of the advocacy group Voices for Illinois Children, opted to resign after the report was leaked to the press. "The people of Illinois must have full confidence in the leadership of their state, and I will not be a distraction in achieving that goal. ... I am holding myself accountable for a mistake I alone made. I do not want to be a distraction for the Governor, the work of his administration and — most importantly — for the people of Illinois," Stermer said in a written statement. (For more on Stermer, see *Illinois Issues*, October 2009, page 15.)

His replacement was director of policy for Quinn before her appointment as Human Services secretary last October.

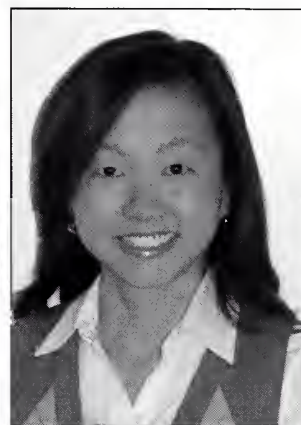


Michelle Saddler

Quinn called Saddler a "committed idealistic person" who is "hard working" and "honest."

"I am me," said Saddler, who also worked as the director of investments for Quinn when he was state treasurer. "I bring all the strengths and shortcomings that a person might have, but I work hard. I believe in honesty all the way. And I believe in partnership. So I look forward to a continued partnership with our legislators, our employees, our providers and our advocacy groups. And of course with all our state agencies and Gov. Quinn."

Grace Hong Duffin, chief of staff for the Department of Human Services since 2009, was appointed acting secretary of the agency. She was an assistant state's attorney for eight years and also served as a chief administrative law judge for the Illinois Department of Public Health.



Grace Hong Duffin

Corrections director steps down

Michael Randle, the embattled director of the Illinois Department of Corrections, stepped down in September to take a job at a corrections facility in Ohio.



Michael Randle

Gladys Taylor was tapped to replace Randle. She will move up from acting assistant director to acting director. Before coming over to the department in May, Taylor was deputy director of Gov. Pat Quinn's Office of Management and Budget. She previously worked for the Department of Corrections.

During his time at the department, Randle implemented the "Meritorious Good Time Push" program, which applied "good time" credit to prisoners' sentences as soon as they began serving them. Under the program, some prisoners spent as few as 11 days behind bars. Before MGT Push, the department had a

longstanding policy requiring prisoners to serve at least 61 days before they could get discretionary early release credit.

Randle said the now-defunct program was part of an effort to cut the budget. A total of 1,745 inmates were released before the usual 61 days. On average, they served 36 fewer days than they would have under the 61-day policy. The Department of Corrections estimated that MGT Push could have saved \$3.4 million annually.

After MGT Push became the focus of media scrutiny, Quinn shut it down. He said Randle went against his orders by letting some violent offenders out early but defended him. Randle served for 19 years in Ohio's correctional system. Before becoming director of the Illinois Department of Corrections in June of last year, he was the assistant director of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction.

For updated news see the *Illinois Issues* Web site at <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>

OBIT

Joel Brunsvold

The 20-year veteran of the General Assembly and former director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources died September 7. He was 68.

Brunsvold served from 1983 to 2003 in the Illinois House of Representatives, representing the Quad Cities area.

Rep. Patrick Verschoore, a Milan Democrat who was appointed to Brunsvold's seat when he went to the DNR, says Brunsvold's agenda focused on conservation, hunting, fishing and education.

He says Brunsvold secured funding for the Veterans Memorial Bridge over the Rock River and for rural fire departments.

Brunsvold served as DNR director from 2003 to 2005. Before coming to the legislature, he worked as a teacher and also served as the mayor of Milan.

"He is a great guy. We're going to miss him. It is just tragic when something like that happens. Life is so fragile," says Verschoore.

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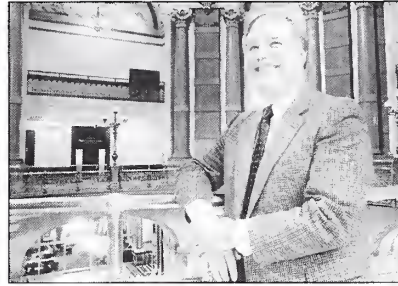
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Charles N. Wheeler III



Voters will be asked whether the Constitution should be changed to allow recall

by Charles N. Wheeler III

In the first 36 years after the Illinois Constitution took effect in 1971, state lawmakers introduced 829 resolutions proposing amendments to the new document. Exactly one of those would have given voters the power to recall elected officials, and that 1979 effort died in committee.

In contrast, in the four years following former Gov. Rod Blagojevich's second inauguration in 2007, legislators offered 161 proposed amendments, including 14 to add recall to the charter.

The sudden interest in empowering voters to remove crooked and/or incompetent public officials was not coincidental, of course, but rather came in response to the clouds of corruption swirling around the former governor. Indeed, 10 of the 14 resolutions were offered after Blagojevich was impeached by the House, convicted by the Senate and removed from office in January 2009.

Next month, one of those resolutions will be on the ballot, asking voters whether the Constitution should be changed to allow citizens to recall a governor. By wide margins, the House and the Senate approved the proposed amendment last year, setting up the November vote that could see Illinois join the ranks of 18 other states whose constitutions permit voters to bounce officials with whom they've become disenchanted without waiting for the next election.

Only in Illinois would the approval of political insiders be needed for folks to undertake something as quintessentially grass roots as a recall drive.

Perhaps fittingly, though, the recall process being considered for Illinois is unlike that in any of the other recall states. Here, the provision would apply only to governors, while all the other 18 states cover the entire executive branch, 17 also include legislators and 11 throw in the judiciary for good measure, according to information from the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Moreover, the Illinois plan would require recall advocates to gather signatures of registered voters equal to 15 percent of the total votes cast for governor in the most recent election, a threshold lower than most other states, which typically require signatures equal to 25 percent or more of the vote for the office involved. Based on the 2006 gubernatorial

returns, the difference is significant — roughly 350,000 fewer than would be needed under the yardstick used in most other states.

In addition, the Illinois proposal would require the petitions to include at least 100 signatures from residents of at least 25 of the state's 102 counties, a geographical mandate similar to ones found in only two of the recall states.

While seven of the 18 states require specific grounds for recall, typically incompetence or misconduct, the Illinois plan would allow a recall drive for any — or no particular — reason.

If a recall were successful, the proposal would call for a second, successor election within 60 days to finish out the removed chief executive's term. Most states avoid that additional cost, either by holding the recall and successor elections at the same time, as occurred in California in 2003, or by filling the vacancy by appointment. The tab for a successful recall involving two statewide elections could exceed \$100 million, according to estimates from state elections officials.

Perhaps the most bizarre aspect of the proposed amendment, however, is the requirement that those planning a recall drive first must file an affidavit signed by at least 10 senators and 20 representatives, no more than half in either chamber from a single political party, before they can proceed.

Only in Illinois would the approval of political insiders be needed for folks to undertake something as quintessentially grass roots as a recall drive, which along with initiative and referendum, formed the cornerstones of the populist movement for direct democracy that was so in vogue in the early 20th century.

Contradictions aside, the proposed amendment does seem a little like closing the barn door after the horse is gone. The man who clearly motivated it will never be subject to its terms; besides booting Blagojevich out of office last year, the Senate also imposed a political death penalty, voting unanimously to bar him forever from holding any public office in Illinois.

Proponents argue that recall would provide voters with an additional check on a governor, a reminder that "the will of the people cannot be taken for granted," according to the official materials. Shortly after the proposal cleared the legislature, Gov. Pat Quinn, a long-time supporter, labeled recall "the ultimate

ethics measure for the people of Illinois."

Such rhetoric notwithstanding, Illinois citizens already have the power to remove a governor or any public official with whom they are no longer satisfied. Indeed, Quinn himself may discover this in a very painful and personal way in a few short weeks, when voters go to the polls.

True, recall might appeal to people's desire for instant gratification, but the proposal also carries significant risk. One inherent danger is recall's capacity to undercut a governor's resolve to follow an unpopular but fiscally or governmentally appropriate path. Whoever the next governor is, he'll almost certainly have to find new revenues and make painful spending cuts. Should he be subject to recall just six months into his term, engineered by people outraged at those unpleasant but necessary steps?

Or more broadly, if a future chief executive has to worry about a possible recall drive every time he or she crosses a well-heeled special interest group,

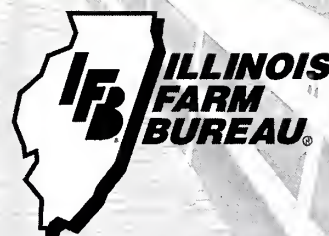
what impact might that have on policy decisions?

Perhaps a better approach might be for citizens to become better informed before the fact, rather than count on a quick fix when they experience buyers' remorse. No one should have been surprised by Blagojevich's fall from grace; the warning signs abounded during the 2006 campaign, from U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald's reference to "very serious allegations of endemic hiring fraud" to Auditor General William Holland's regular reports documenting serious mismanagement throughout the administration.

Rather than adopting a problematic recall provision, voters should remember the Constitution already provides a suitable solution for those rare instances in which a governor is truly unfit to serve, as the whole sorry Blagojevich affair demonstrates. □

Charles N. Wheeler III is director of the Public Affairs Reporting program at the University of Illinois Springfield.

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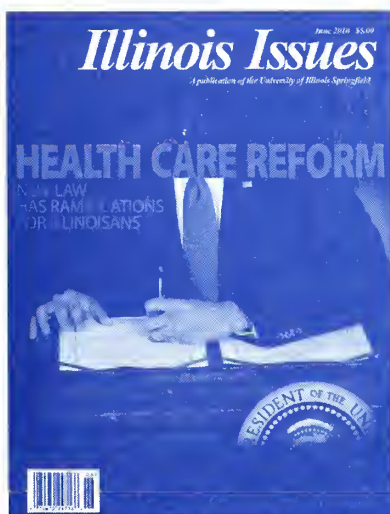
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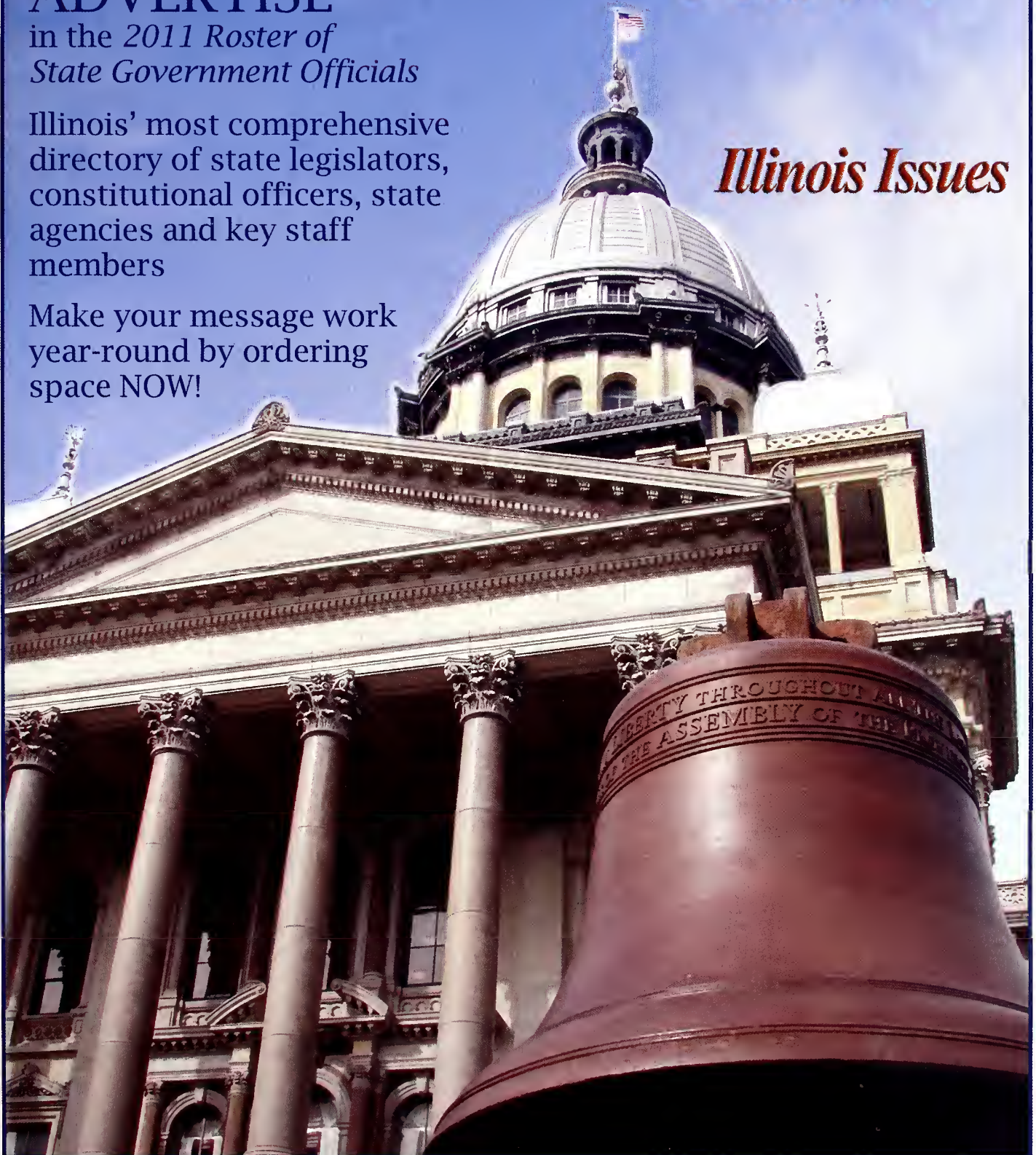
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